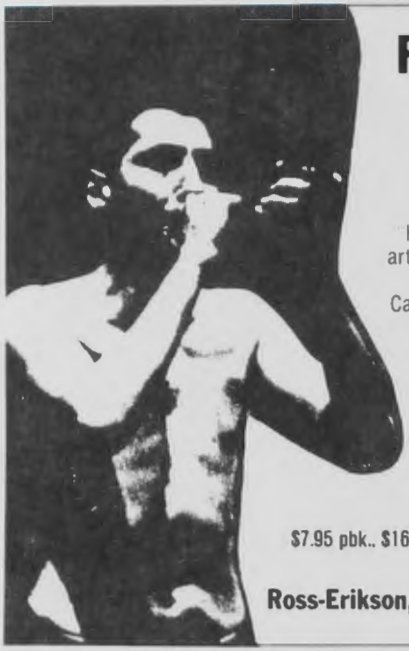
Sulfur 6

FEATURING: WINDS/INSTRUMENTS
BY JACKSON MAC LOW ▲ ELEVEN POEMS
BY BARONESS ELSA VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN
ARK 39 BY RONALD JOHNSON



REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

JACKSON MAC LOW

Should be a masterpiece,' writes Dick Higgins of the Ross-Erikson spring publication of poet Jackson Mac Low's lifetime collection of work, *REPRESENTATIVE WORKS*.

'His poetry sets us ecstatic... It is possible to imagine that the artists whose works we live with constitute not a vocabulary but an alphabet by means of which we spell our lives,' says John Cage of the major proponent of systematic chance procedures in contemporary poetry.

'...for the things that no one else did. For showing us that poetry can be collaborative. For contributing so much to the cross-fertilization of the arts...for doing it all so long and so well,' writes the *Village Voice* about America's foremost experimental poet.

Jerome Rothenberg, Editor: New Wilderness Poetics Series
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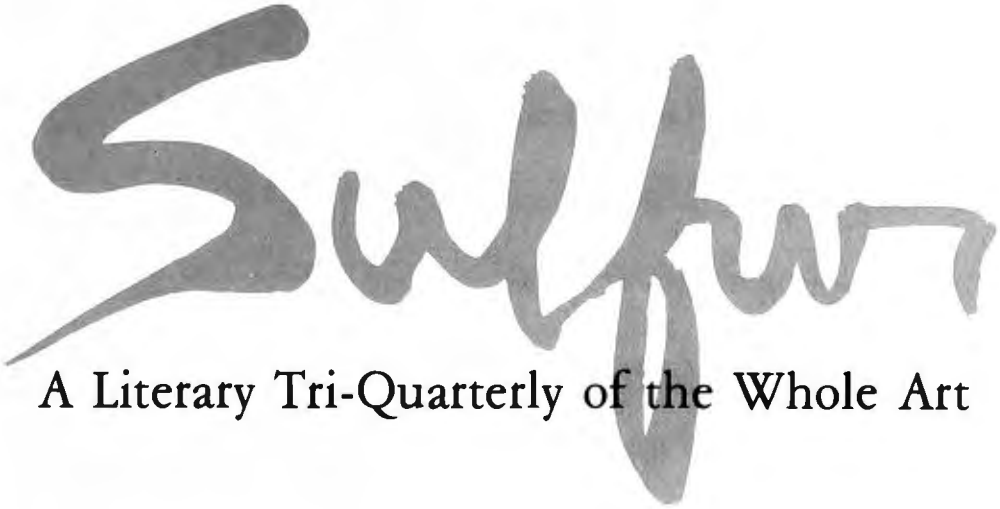

A Literary Tri-Quarterly of the Whole Art

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Cover art: Choreography/Costume from the dance "After Words" (1981) by Alice Farley, photo by Ronald Kienhuis

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Introduction and Performance Instructions for "Winds"/"Instruments"

"Winds"/"Instruments" is a performance work for narrator(s) and for instrumentalists who also occasionally speak. All of its verbal and tonal materials derive from extensive word lists, each of which includes only words spelled solely with the letters of the name of a musical instrument (each word listed with suffixes indicating other word forms built from the base word, e.g., plurals, that are spelled with those letters—no letter appearing in any word form on the list more times than it occurs in the instrument's name).

The title "Winds" adhered solely to the work from August 1980, when I began its composition, until sometime after its premiere at The Kitchen in New York on 18 October 1980. The instruments in that performance were transverse flutes (played by Andrew Bolotowsky and Susan Stenger), recorders (played by Pete Rose), clarinets—including bass (played by Dan Goode and Armand Schwerner), and trombone (played by James Staley); and there were four narrators: Anne Tardos (reading the "Transverse Flute" narrative), Katherine Bourbonais ("Recorder"), Eve Rosenthal ("Clarinet"), and Jackson Mac Low ("Trombone").

Subsequent performances in New York (Bilhaud Gallery, 26 Feb. 1981), Baltimore (Red Door Hall, 28 Mar. 1981), and San Francisco (Intersection, 2 June 1981) have included electric guitars (first played in the NY 2/26/81 performance by Rhys Chatham and Ned Sublette)

and an "Electric Guitar" narrative. For such performances including instruments other than winds (a pianoforte part and narrative are in preparation as of 9 May 1982) I have adopted the title "Instruments" —accidentally given to "Winds" by Tom Johnson's generous review of its Kitchen premiere in *The Village Voice* (Dec. 3-9, 1981). (Many thanks to Tom for this useful mistake as well as for his appreciative critique). In all performances after the first I've myself read all of the narratives appropriate to the particular instrumental ensembles, in a sense, "conducting" the performances from the narrator's stand by regulating tempi, silence durations, and amplitudes. Future performances (like the premiere) may include two or more narrators.

Composition. From each word list derived from the name of a musical instrument both an instrumental part and a prose "narrative" are prepared as follows:

1. The words on the list being numbered, a random-digit table is used to obtain a series of numbers, and from this number series, the corresponding series of words from the list (usually in their base forms).

2. A letter-pitch class "code" is prepared through which the successive letters of the base forms of the words in the series are "translated" into a series of pitch-class names.

3. The pitch-class series is notated on conventional five-line musical staves (headed by the clef(s) appropriate to the instrument and its range) as a series of whole notes. The notes corresponding to the letters of each word are notated between bar lines and below the word itself, which is lettered above the staff. That is, each "measure" translates the letters of the word above it. (In the parts for transposing instruments the concert-pitch equivalents of the letters are appropriately transposed, e.g., in the part for B-flat clarinet, A natural, the concert-pitch equivalent of the letter "A," is notated as a B natural.)

4. The register (octave placement) of each note is decided improvisatorily by the composer during preparation of the part and (except in the case of the recorder part) is to be followed exactly by the instru-

mentalist (unless the latter is strongly impelled during a performance to play certain notes in other octaves). The recorder player(s) decide(s) octave placements of all notes during each performance: the recorder part gives a series of pitch *classes*, whereas each of the other parts gives a series of *pitches*.

5. From the same series of words as that from which the instrumental part is derived, a "narrative" is written by placing structure words (and sometimes others) between the list words, either in their base forms or in other permissible forms indicated on the list by suffixes.

The instrumental parts and narratives for/from transverse flute, recorder, clarinet, and trombone were prepared in August-October 1980; those for electric guitar, in February 1981; and in May 1982, when this introduction was being written, a pianoforte part and narrative were in process.

Performance. During a performance only the narratives derived from the names of the instruments actually played in that performance are read—in succession—either by two or more different narrators (as in the Kitchen permiere) or by a single narrator (as in other performances). The narrator(s) may observe substantial silences between paragraphs (though it is better not to do so between ones that are closely connected) and before and after each narrative. The narrator(s) may "conduct" and pace the performance, to a certain extent, by setting and sometimes changing the reading tempo and by prolonging or curtailing the silences.

Any number of the instrumental parts and connected narratives may be played and read during any particular performance. Each instrumental part may be played by two or more instrumentalists, each realizing the part independently.

All of the instrumental parts that are realized during a performance are played simultaneously in free polyphony. All parameters except pitch and amplitude (duration of tones, aggregates—intervals, chords, tone clusters—and silences, their placement in the audible

plenum, and the ways of beginning ("attacks") and continuing tones, etc.; meter and/or pulse (if any); tempo and tempo changes; timbre and timbre changes; etc.) are decided by the performers—influenced by each others' and ambient sounds. They are limited, however, to amplitudes *between mezzo forte* (mf) *and pianissimo* (pp), except during a narrator's long silences, though allowed freely to choose and change—crescendo and decrescendo—within that range. They can also speak some of the words written above the measures of the parts from time to time, and a word may be spoken at quite another time from when the tones corresponding to the word are played.

All choices in playing and speaking (instrumentalists' and narrators') are to be made in careful and conscious relation with the audible plenum perceived by each individual and its changes (all perceptible sounds produced by the instrumentalists, narrator(s), audience, and environment). Great care must be taken to ensure that the narratives' words are clear—audible and intelligible—to both audience and performers: the narrator(s) must speak and space the words carefully; instruments must never drown out the narrator(s), keeping well below forte (f) as long as the narrator(s) speak(s), the more so the larger the number of simultaneous sounds, with instrumental tutti during narratives hovering around piano (p). However, during a narrator's silences instrumentalists may play as loudly and as densely as they feel moved to (or as softly and as sparsely).

Instrumentalists play straight through the pitch (or pitch class) series constituting their parts. They phrase freely and may disregard the bar lines in their phrasings and other tone groupings (e.g., aggregates). If an instrumentalist reaches the end of the instrument's part before the end of a performance, the part must be begun again, but truncated at whatever point in it is reached when the performance ends.

The narrator(s) and instrumentalists are urgently requested to listen intently throughout the performance, with a degree of attention and concentration akin to that of a person seriously practicing

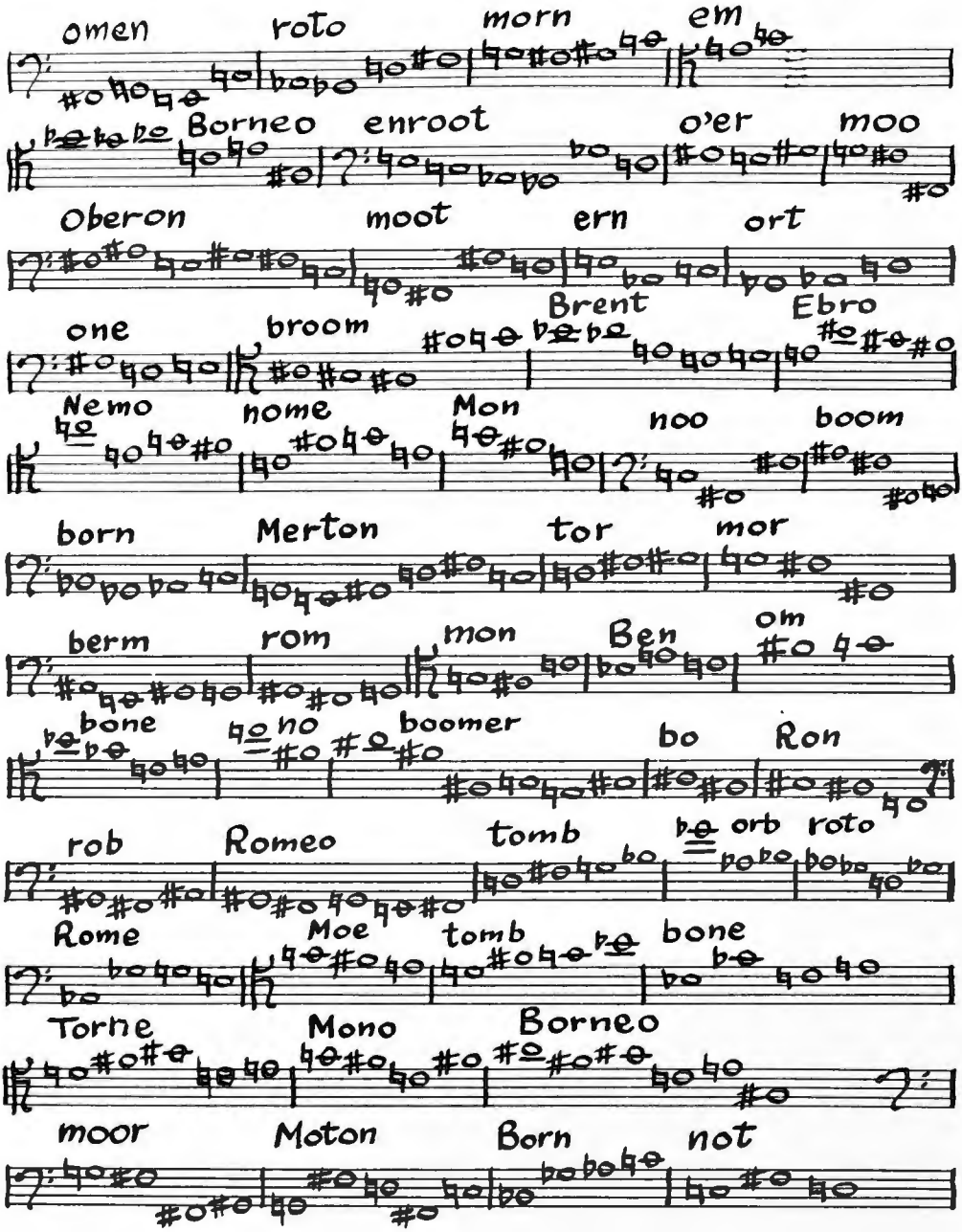
meditation, so that conscious choices are also spontaneous responses and inventions of ways of actualizing pitch series and speaking words proceed directly from inspiration. Not only must performers constantly monitor the loudness of the whole ensemble as well as their own, but each instrumentalist should stop playing from time to time (at any point in the pitch series), observing silence while listening closely until the time seems ripe for a conscious resumption of the realization, and the narrator(s) should be similarly attentive, not only while reading—during which they must constantly make small changes in amplitude and tempo, both in response to the instrumental sounds and ambience and to ensure intelligibility—but also during the silences observed before, between paragraphs of, and after each narrative in order to decide when it's better to let the instruments proceed without narrative and when to resume reading. It goes without saying that narrator responses will be matters of nuance rather than gross changes.

Beginning, Ending, Signaling. The first (or the only) narrator begins a performance by standing before the entire ensemble, raising both hands overhead, holding them there until attention of ensemble and audience is ensured, and then bringing them down sharply. Each instrumentalist has the option of either beginning immediately or of remaining silent until some later time when they wish to enter. The narrator moves to a microphone (unless one is placed where the signal was given) and waits silently listening to the ensemble, allowing a certain amount of instrumental "development" to take place before beginning the first narrative.

The narrator(s) ought always to be clearly visible to the instrumentalists in order to signal, if necessary, the beginnings and endings of silences (e.g., by moving the right arm and hand across the chest, palm down, until the fingers touch the left shoulder, and then moving arm and hand in a horizontal arc, slowly, until they are stretched out straight from the right shoulder, perpendicular to the body's right side). Such signals may be dispensed with if, during re-

hearsals, it becomes clear that they are unnecessary.

After reading the last words of the final narrative, the narrator (or last narrator reading) moves, unless already there, to the position in front of the ensemble and waits silently for a few or even several minutes, while the instrumentalists continue realizing their parts—now, of course, without amplitude limitations. Then, either at the narrator's discretion or when an ending time previously agreed upon has nearly arrived, the narrator raises both hands overhead to indicate that the end of the performance is near. When the narrator judges that a satisfactory ending has been reached or the time agreed upon has arrived, the narrator brings both arms down abruptly, and all the instrumentalists must immediately stop playing.

Developed August-October 1980
This text written 7-12 May 1982

Trombone part
WINDS
Jackson Mac Low (1980)
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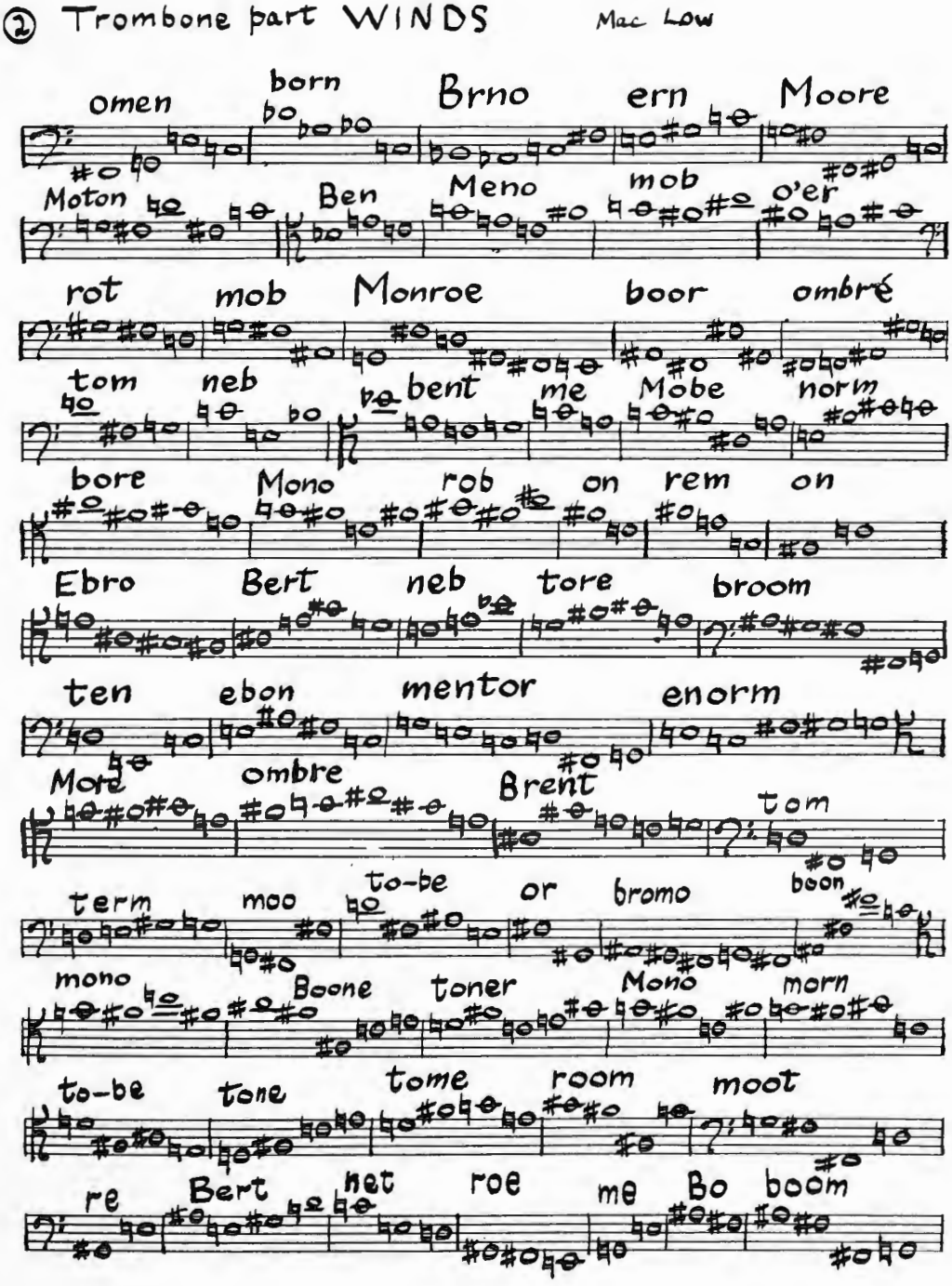
② Trombone part WINDS
Mac Low
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Ebro
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tore
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mentor
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More
ombre
Brent
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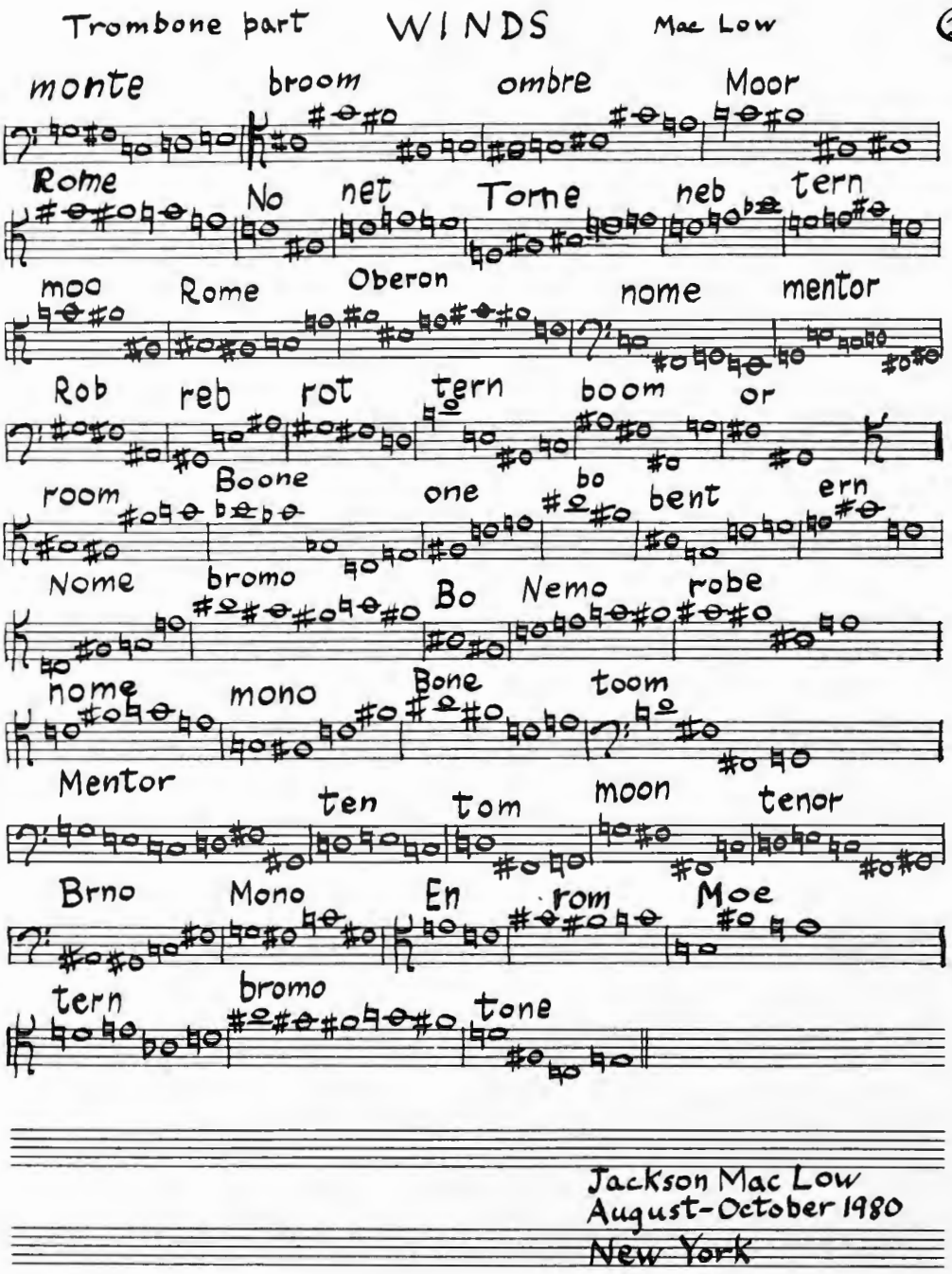
Trombone part
WINDS
Mac Low
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Moor
Rome
No
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Torne
neb
tern
moo
Rome
Oberon
nome
mentor
Rob
reb
rot
tern
boom
or
room
Boone
one
bo
bent
ern
Nome
bromo
Bo
Nemo
robe
nome
mono
Bone
toom
Mentor
ten
tom
moon
tenor
Brno
Mono
En
rom
Moe
tern
bromo
tone
Jackson Mac Low
August-October 1980
New York

Transverse Flute Narrative for Winds/Instruments

Lette is on an arête, while errant Lear's among the trees. Their talers on a ratter, they starve through Nerva's fault. These savers and lavers of tsars start an astute returnee to Sèvres—"neural" Steen—on ferula. And Verne? On lasers.

These savers' "ut" on Susan's turf is terse.

But Sverre has his rentes and Estes his vertu. They can sauté anything to taste, and don't have lues or teslas or fenestrules, though their ulnas are versant with Es Sur. But how many teslas can there be in one late flan?

And how much sal in a vault?

Some of their leases are neural, since these leasers have surra. That's why they and Teena restart a fetus and strafe a seer in a fetal ruse.

In Arles their taters and veenas are real, but Lee slates veenas for Letts, who ask: "If there are fenestrae in every fetus (and there are) and a salver in the Tar (and there may be), why does no leu fasten to Art in Esterel?" As many return to as turn away from their tenets.

Some ask whether any lunette can be serrate if none's ulnar. Let's ravel it out. Did Varèse ever use terne? He was no tsar. And neither Sue nor Eve will ever be a slave!

They say Erastus leavens Steven's unreal settee with flatuses, though his late aunt was a self-starter. Most sales aren't—no more than Renée is U.

Then did Sverre lure Nast to refute the East? Not if Venetes were ever real. And what about Reval? It was never near a tarn. Nevertheless, some fatten, some avert, and some refuse the unreal as Surtees

did vestees.

Do Arles' revenues relate to elators on traves? Where else? Not in vests! Then what did sera ensure for Ur, if a tael can avert a funeral felt in a nevus? That it slant toward Erevan, not us. We aren't any severer, though all luster is from Ra. And when Venus is in estrus, she may flatter stelae terete users revest.

However, in Nevers and Sète furan'll be relet by Vane and Art, although there's a stere of it in Leuven, where there are no reefs to unstate or arrest a leaser. But what does a refuter unreeve from his arse as he strunts about the Senate? Nothing of Serra's, nothing renal, never a sterlet, and nothing frae whoever has rateen to reverse a sternal fever.

Then who'd leave an easel to unstate Tuva's ferrules. Not Serra—he saunters. And not through any fenestrae. He uses tares to taunt truants, transfuse teens, and traverse lutes others revet.

Does no one tease *him*?

Ane: Furness.

Not she who's at the feet of Reese when she's in estrus?

Yes, she who with her ferula ensures, astern, that she's a teaser, with antlers on her feet and ferula in her eaves. She how she struts, a serf of ferula as Una is of furan.

Una who?

Una Tree.

Recorder Narrative for Winds/Instruments

Who's at the core?

Whoever can rede an ode.

Who can rede one?

Reece can—he did.

What was it about?

A roc.

Who was it by?

Ed—long ere this—told a Cree that it was by Rode.

Did his doing that erode anything?

No, according to Rod—but he may be in error.

He's a cerer to the core, but he too can rede Rode.

Is that the Rode who was said to recode decor?

Yes, he was always a doer!

What did he do with a reed?

He taught a coed his creed.

His creed? What was its core?

Can't tell you, doc. But the ore Reed used to make a rod was what he had to cede to Reece. And through an error Ree let Doré do the decor. Rede the record!

Red gave a reed to Rod to erode what he rode so he'd have to reorder. This was due to his credo: he was *so* much against the Reo. If we rede his creed, we see what we dree because of that red recoder. If

he had, Reed wouldn't have had to let Reece have an öre, much less his ore.

What did the doc order, O Reece, and what did Ed reorder? Redo it ere you do that coed recoder. Doc says to do it or dee without an öre for your creed. That's an order!

Dorr made an error as a reder for CORE. "O *CORE!*" cried Ed. Not for Rode e'er was doe so red.

Re "rede," can a doe erode the code of the Cree?

Not by a red cod!

Re "core"—did Ed err?

Not by an öre!

But for decor, Doc had a deer, by Od! Never a roc or a cod.

Let's record what dree we felt re Ree, tied in a coe with a cord, and no doc there, as o'er and o'er Dorr wrote a cee on her.

Was it worse than when Dorée drove to CORE in her Reo?

Worse than it seemed to *her* when no one there spelled "cod" with a cee. Nevertheless, she sold all her ore to make a record for them.

Why didn't she just sell it and buy them plenty of cod?

This way she got them more. She's *so* sincere!

Yes, and she loves deer, too, especially red ones.

Then who could it be who tried to erode what she rode in?

Ree, doc! She's rotten to the core! Y'ought've seen how Ree rode Rod when he erred in his record on Ed! She made him redo it ere she'd cede. That's the way Ree is! She's no deer! As Reece says, she's a doer, not just a recorder. You won't get *her* writing an ode to a Roc!

She'd rede the OED for an öre, that cod! What dree she'd cause o'er a cee! It's only Reed who'll say she's *not* a cod but a deer, but *he*'s

been seen in a Reo with that coed. *He*'d call her a roe, but not Reece.

And not Doré. He says she's an orderer who tried to make him err. Before he'd do *that*, he'd *dee!*

△

Clarinet Narrative for Winds/Instruments

Ariel was on trial for selling an acre of lac to Eli. Eric and Lie rate Cain of the tile cartel for the deal. Enrica of the Rat Islands says it was really actin and nice enough to still the ire of a tin ratel telic toward a tin ear. But Enrica, says Crile, likes recta and lace and having her retina lit by a rite by Racine. Cain—that ani!—let her acne, according to Ian, rein him in—or was it her tic made him give her the air?

Eric, who came from a tiny ait, is a trinal ani for trying to alter the ice on a cart in the Rat Islands, where the lice are tin and the lace linear.

But Carl, that anti-alien from the Line Islands, calls Clare, a tiner of ratiné from Caen, a seller of niter to Rice, who's—la!—a carnie who wears lace, rather than a lancer with a rein for her et al. At any rate, it's clear *she*'s lain alert for Arnie Caine—despite his tin ear. It takes someone like him to rein her in with his rictal grin. Some say he lent a cranet to Clair and tie his use of citral to his tic.

Others drop a tear for Arne, the narc, despite what he did to Crile and Lane and Rena. Now *she*'s also from Caen and knows her Latin. It

could be said to be a kind of cleat for her. And she thinks it's neat for Eric to rant about actin! actin!

But Clair, who lives in an antre, calls her and Ariel lice. That's where *she*'s at! But still, with what éclat she went up and down the Nile! Who'd care about her tic after that? Clare says it helped her do Racine.

Alaric says Nate's passion for her's merely retinal, but Erica claims it's central, even though some say he tried to tine her on the Lena. If he did he's a regular Atli! La! What a tan he got at Acre! It's said he spelled his name there with an eta and let people think he was a Greek. Why, he'd cline to Cain!

In the Near Islands his ain pal Neri owned a crane he had to eat, but on Acte it seemed to rile Aline when she saw Rae react to Carl of the crate cartel when they were all swimming in an inlet. Well, forget that eta.

Erica voiced a *lot* of them aline when at a trial it was said she had lain with Ali and Ira and Tina and Rae in a cart in the open air. Arnie said she sounded like a tern, but Arline really lit *into* him for saying that. So he et his words and shed a tear to quell her ire, just as Ariel did with Earl at Aire when that cretin neat Tina of the actin cartel tried to make Earl cline to her. It was like something that might happen on an acre of an artel.

Was that why Rice gave lire to Ali?

No, you nit! —He gave them for ale!

△

Trombone Narrative for Winds/Instruments

There was an omen in a roto section one morn many years ago. It was only one em big in a photo with a piece on Borneo. Such a thing can enroot itself in your mind so you ponder it o'er and o'er for years. Sometimes it nearly makes you moon, like someone enchanted by Oberon, because its meaning's moot. This one looked like an ern—an eagle of the sea—no bigger than an ort, one you could sweep away with a broom.

The piece was by Brent, who did one the month before on the Ebro, along with Nemo, who'd sing a nome with a Mon—if it'd pay off—noo? During the baby boom he was born in Merton, not far from a tor covered with mor and very near a berm. They say his father was a rom, a mon named Ben, who'd chant "om" to a bone, though he was no boomer.

Some say he was really a bo named Ron, who tried to rob Romeo near a tomb shaped like an orb. I saw in a roto in Rome that someone named Moe something claimed that tomb doesn't have a bone *in* it, like the ones in the Torne River, where all those people died of mono.

That roto page on Borneo had a photo on it of a moor, by Moton. That's the one that had that tiny ern in one corner. Born claimed it was neither sea eagle nor omen, but he was born in Brno and's never *seen* an ern.

I asked Peter Moore about Moton and he said, "He's like Ben—always reading the Meno. One of that mob that goes crazy o'er rot like that—that 'Greeky' mob!" Monroe says every one of them's a boor in an ombré jacket.

My tom caught a bird with a neb like the one on the bird in that

photo. That really *bent* me! Someone at the Mobe said that kind of neb's the norm, but he's a bore from near Lake Mono, where some people rob you on sight, as if they'd absorbed a rem too many. They say the same thing happens on the Ebro.

Bert says a bird with a neb like that tore a broom from his hands ten years ago—"an ebon mentor enorm," he called it, quoting More, I guess, or some other player of ombre. But the bird in that picture with Brent's article looked smaller than the one my tom caught. "Ern"'s certainly not the term for it. You might as well moo like a bull's bride-to-be than misname a bird or a beast. It's like calling bromo a "boon" to someone with mono.

And I don't mean the Boone who poured toner in Lake Mono one morn. A conceptualist and critic-to-be, the tone of his tome leaves no room for the moot. Re Bert he wrote that he'd caught in a net a fish full of roe for me from the Bo River while hanging by his knees from a boom. Disputing with someone like that's like playing monte with a broom or ombre with a Moor, as they say in Rome.

Bert fished not in the Bo but in Lake No with a net, as he also did in the Torne. But you don't have to talk through a neb like a tern's or moo in Rome under Oberon's spell, believing you're chanting a nome to some mentor like Rob the reb, to talk such rot!

Of the tern of terns ("tern"'s three meanings)—sea swallow, three-masted schooner, and group of three—the seabirds don't boom like bitterns; the schooners *have* booms; and "normal," "boom," and "bust" form an economic tern. But nowhere on land or sea is there room for a liar like Boone. He's one bo I'd say was bent. Let's forget 'im.

The only ern I've ever seen was one in Nome. It scared me so I had to take a bromo to calm down. I wished I was on the Bo River, where Nemo bought that robe in which he sang many a nome before he got mono from Bone, his toom mentor. But I'd ten times rather hear my

tom singing to the moon than Nemo's tenor, whether in Brno or on Lake Mono. "En" is a rom, according to Moe, but he sounds like a tern. If he took a strange bromo, his tone might improve, but I doubt it.

△

Electric Guitar Narrative for Winds/Instruments

Someone relit an aglet circa sometime.

"Was it celiac?"

"No, ye carle! Don't rattle on!" cried Uri circa tater time.

"If not," asked the trite one from Tulagi, "was it iliac?"

Then did he cuittle up a gale, standing on one leg on a tract of tile so ecru you could eat it. There was a lot more of that on a neighboring alette.

Which tells a truer tale—that article by Ira about an artel or the one by Curie? Cut the clatter. Roll like a tire o'er a lea. —No, not the Lee who on the Içá acted as others had acted at Acre, tarred on by many a gul.

"If you think that's Uralic, you err," sighed Clare, who'd tried to recirculate Liu as some do laterite.

"Was it from that that Lucretia made a gutta with a cutter before she took tea with that shy GI on the Içá?"

"Only if a terret could ligate a wound (et al.) in the arctic, or if Tate or Luc in their ecru quarters could create what *I* could—what I *might*—in a garret o' garlic."

Now Cecil and that ERA tart from the IU in her tutelar curler, that Gael with rattler guilt, follow the arc of a tracer and a curler to the useful uracil.

Did they find a buried eucrite by observing an EEG? Did they work with a circuit curt as a sage of Elea? One was seen on an arête of late, irreal as a tace amid ragi, where the ca' o' the era's a tactic in a cage or that of a gal in a lair.

We reel—we let a curler or Elgar, let a lug or Lucretia, uglier than the Liri, send us to Rigel on less than an erg.

In Trier during the telic trial of a tit too uric, I in my titular garret and Leticia in her cat rig elicit a terret or two from Cecile and the GAR. But from her atelier Gretel sends a lute as a letter to an earl who'd lent her a teal. Her curé had advised her to act as if "tacet" were writ in her score and to follow tactile rule e.

Though a trailer might elate a Tai, the same trailer might to Grete look like an ecru tailer in a rage at a gate—worse than a titi with the gleet at Augier waving a curet at Lucca over claret.

Gale and Clarice reluct to litigate over a tercet. They let each other retire to clit or teal, with regret rectal as the regret of Cecilia at Taegu, where under the lee of a trailer she'd ceil vehicles for the literate.

But poor Clartie! Felled by a curie! He'd girt himself to irrigate the curia—did that auger a grail? Did he try to gelate something cruciate? He didn't try to do it to an ai or to Clare, whose eluate is tearier than rue, liter for liter.

"Can we regard a tectal structure as a kind of inner Lar?"

"Tut never asked that, nor did any tart in Uccle! Neither did Carteret—wherever he was at. Whatever titre of what it takes is al-

lowed by the GATT, to Uccle or the artic, it's not enough to retire on!

When Celia flew cut-rate to Tula, she played trictrac by the relit trail to the tele trial of Lautrec in Lüta—or was it in Trier? There in the gutter a trace of celeriac hinted at Rigel to ITU people. But 'twas someone from Eire that an ai would cite as a rat rattier than Rice, whose every ruga was relit by Rae, whom the ai'd regale with a rite on lute near Clee. There Lettice was regal as the teal Rice induced to curr in Tula while everyone in Urga had to lie in a clutter of gut.

And far away along a trail "Every reticule," Greta reported, "was centered on a ratite." She'd seen it all from a litter, despite a red retinal rete.

This narrative is for Grete, whose name arrived last on my list.

△

Paul Hoover

The Chinese Notebook

Three summers ago, in Chinatown,
you bought the Chinese notebook,
Flying Eagle trademark,
with the flying eagle stamped in red
like an eye in the center of it.
Inside were gradual childish pages
gridded in lines that opened wide
like a city seen from the air.
It was respectable, calm.
The notebook sat unoccupied, and then one day
you sat down and occupied it
the way a gentleman enters an apple
or a cat walks through a wall,
with all due concern, with apologies.
And what if there was a place like this
(smokestacks, girders, noise)
where everything was smaller than life size,
though in proportion, innately good?
On the hazardous blue of the factory grass
you'd practice your nonchalant stroll
until you "got it right," and there was no need
for walking at all, just the thought of

ants contending for the edge of a sleeve

and funny green lizards eating the finches

of which there are two
Boats are slow
Mr. Leopard
er, um, uh, well
The face of the rock
saying you are tired
our descent descent
departing day
wends his way
we climb, they climb
between two rhymes
the earth is green
from Park Nineteen
in the sea of the farm
a cold man flying
Electra lost
This is my ode
shaped like an ax
voices mere
Laughing Killer
Molly Bloom's
the truth is in

in the world
  tangled in vines
is the expert
  on the literature of
did speak to him
  It is here we begin
as curfew tolls
  the plowman homeward
I climb, you climb
  the uneasy distance
The sky is blue
  I am a driver
I think that I shall never see
  the dream of hay
destroying a garden
  the radios silent
to all the typos
  my adolescence
across the aisle
  Escapes from Jail
and yet, and yet
  the joking aside

a bloodhound sniffing
as one who reads
I is another
Here is my heart
who sits in the house
O eloquent tourist
O Tennessee Ernie
piles of ribbon
searching for you
a cold man flying
two tough Frenchmen
without the noble
confessing on buses
who roughly resemble
Lake Matapongpong
that dreamy village
from Kiss My Ass
until your word
Harold Bloom
first you're conceived
please correct me
who speaks of the poet

the edge of a nerve
only the margin
physical silver
placebo addict
thinking engines
high in a window
coup de tete
build up on the floor
almost perfection
with stupid courage
beating a nun
nothing is simple
to total strangers
the book of the month
another Bing Crosby
who no one is born
to Something Or Other
is green again
surrounded by lions
then absent-minded
if I'm wrong
as "virgin hero"

Brasilia, Brazil
embroidered in carpets
and Liberace
a slow elevator
the war broke out
a mountain lion
writing verses
with terrible pleasure
to Wally Cox
Hello out there!
when he has erred
Ernesto Cohen
blue traffic cop
Metaphysics

you find your face
  you that is
a wet painting on
  that was the year
because I seen
  now they've caught me
Emily moaned
  reading an ode
or should that be
  the surgeon's face
the Shetland pony
  the very blue
First Church of Sacred
  373-3289

This, too, the Chinese notebook knows,
as if in a windy mirror it could turn its pages
to drawings of cows and long simple lines
meaning rain. They slant off and go,
and a theory of art occurs,
that the melodies heard by peasants
through the open windows of the manor
are memorized by them
and sung again at their gatherings.
But the opposite also holds,
the aristocrat influenced

(he will say it came in a dream)
by evening songs from the cabins.
Eloquence either way,
and trimmed or untrimmed,
there's the beauty of the scenery,
the slow-moving, arthritic animals
that "decorate" the side of the road.
There's the sticky glass panel
separating you and the driver,
who now and then turns to face you
in a rage of speech and gestures.

Figures of the Eye

tiredness protects
against excessive pride
can I get closer
to what's behind my stratagems
than sleep?

face relaxed away from talk, from
violence to carved in stone
hardly at rest
before it gentles
like a woman's is supposed to

strangeness
from lid to droop
curve indefinitely prolonged
as words can lengthen a brief look
as far as Oriental cities

but if in sleep
the eye is held: a ritual stare
as formalizes marriage?
male fixes female
desire lashes out
trembling
laden with pollen

nightly journey
the prudent man's rest
urging as escape
what means excavation

but the fever
is quenched by salt water
it is already
on its way down from the heart
blind shivers
after swells so violent

the dream has touched here
centaurs galloping across the bed
precarious hooves sink
into soft furrows
as if sex
a pillow
fear of the breathing mirror
accentuates every blemish
shows what we call love
a disposition so
beyond our knowing
a malady
as curable as racial traits

farther down
caresses
continue into strangling
spasms grow cold
with an ease not ours
and the future tapers
from understood to seen:

the apple eaten, the core
rotting away

then day dawns blindly
and the air
so thick the tide stays out
though the horizon
comes to mass against me
with bodies risen
eyes coupling
in unending
arching light

Photo by Jennifer Kotter

Jerome Rothenberg performing in his Hugo Ball costume.

Jerome Rothenberg

Yaqui 1982

"the eye of the performance is cruel"
—H. Blau

1

the jews of ceremony
dance in the thin sand of
pascua pueblo in their pinhole
eyes new fires start
watched by ourselves & others
the bright memory of days to come
tomorrow but the face
back of the mask
is fathomless
the jews march through the night
clack-clack their sticks
speak for them
red & white
the tips like dagger points
& voiceless
they are the purveyors of the death of jesus
yaqui-style
they stomp & whip each other
thursdays the master jew
baldheaded man with droopy eyes
& half-a-beard

fresh crown of thorns over his ears
squats by the cross
black-coated
in white jodhpurs
it is the man without the belt
(el viejito)
who seeks the heart of jesus
in a box
white-covered
with lines of green above
the flat red heart
& silver rays
he looks into & sees
a crucifix a water bottle
flowers & candles
then bangs his sticks
together in a trance
they lead him with a silky rope
pinned to his shoulders
jews & clowns
how beautifully they walk
the stations of the cross
in yaqui
the plaza stretches to infinity
where the smallest freak is jesus
& the angels sing

2

"you smile & the angels sing"
—TRADITIONAL

judas coyote rages
at altar cracks
twin sticks for language
when the bell rings—
the virgin dangling
overhead—her name
her residue of fat he wipes
mindless down his thigh
mad dog mad judas
the first to poke his snout
under the altar
to sniff the linens on
the dead man's crotch
behind him packs of jews erupt
stalking the dead man's tracks
like flies
mad pharisees & litvocks
goat-faced dada jews
banging a klezmer tomtom
fiddles & accordions
they strum & dance to
faggot jews who hump each other
military jews
& jewish sheriffs
a pulpy cherub jew who bellows

an apache jew a lizard a highstepping jew
a nigger jew who chews a stogie
an arab jew with hiccups
a jew who dies of constipation
a two-headed jew
a jew without a nose
a jew who rolls by in a perfect sphere
a troop of jews with bells on
brushing past us, touching
the coyote jew who walks beside
a second jew like jesus
like judas riding backwards
on a mule
feet dangling
forehead aglow & bald
the body of the martyr
red with ants
astride the universe
they face & shake their hips
the accountant & the dog of heaven
whom we watch here
in the full moon over tucson
a true vision of the cross
they give us
comic deaths felt down the ages
judas burning
maestro who keeps the catholic
maestro's dribble
from our ears

3

only the clown plays jesus
here the other jesus
remaining in wood or plaster
he is laid out in purple gowns
his bier is like
a birthday cake from which
a doll emerges
the babe's head of the other poems
to grace our dreams it is
the ordinary insanity of art
my dear anselmo
enchanted worlds
we have all touched
on the green side of your purple house
in tucson a white leaf
is very real
it has grown by leaps over the winter
(someone writes)
& fills the deep well
next to the cloud pump
stalking so slowly the deer
dancer advances
that the church bursts with
anticipation
(someone else writes)
"trust the world to little max"
& if I do

seamlessly across the canyon rides
the dada financier
his head a squash
his heart a breadbox
with a mechanic's gift for flowers
he will match you
world for world anselmo
wheels & axles
thrown into the air to make them
sing a dentist's drill
a meat grinder
the mist on railroad tracks
will fly around him
headlights will be deformed
—zimbrabim—
will light up shoes
& nylon hair
we will prepare our voyage to the desert
the flower world
anselmo
where a crazed stewardess will bring us
both a tray
a dish shaped like a funnel
a delay in glass that holds
a single eyeball

△

Clark Coolidge

Peru Eye, The Heart of the Lamp

There is a stone in the air
calls on me to quiet
all that moves and is not light

I sit on the solar spine
a stone so carved connects
to nothing but still
all the distance lights

•

And do you wander in a blue stone town,
plain linking own self to mountains, or
with others? Train signal of an anciency,
Jupiter and Saturn rise together. Bare round
powers. How did they lock the stones?

•

And I still stand cleaved between Incan walls,
stones hold. The harpman blind sings in the sand
that held his hand alert as cut corners.
The sun is out of line in the Indian past, settlings
of Mestizo stark wine. He whims and blends,

almost Apalachian latch, and the sun renders
a dolly racket on the Fanta fenders. Juice
neon green washes ash, and browning awning benders.
Still am in Peru, I doubt my start.

•

It was silent in the world with the voices
like soapstones. And in the yard the grass
we talked on they had sat on. Sun and
moon and on. Hats were trivets.
Stones that fit a leather sort of granite.
Since that homing on a ridge spine time
the humans have progressively retired. We had
to go there. We couldn't stop speaking so
we did.

•

She cried with grief that the boy would
  take her clasp as the walls tolled
There in overage Peru, under the
  powdered scrape of the Fanta sign
But we left the train, in the cloak of the soft
  ore bars returning to their stone
It was night, a night like a day that had
  not always returned

•

Where the light water flowed in spar streams

not Greece, Peru, but the light was.
And the Indian girl ran down from the hill
a lamb on her arm to be pictured for coin
But this taker was a mirror
her spirit refused

•

We walked in single file along the shorn stones
the mists to recede and the mountains bump us
We could only imagine on their compass intentions
the sun an only part of their year

•

If you walk up this height
you will score the sky.

•

We sat there carefully and listened. It was a
park. It was not. Sometimes you feel you
are clinging up here. They have placed the stones
as little apart as possible. Perhaps they had no
concept of "on"? They had wanted to become
part of the ground.

"All the separate stones hunger to be once again
part of the great universal rock that they
came from. We have been at some pains
to oblige them."

We did not know where the sun was.
Different portions of stone and plant lit up
in pattern according to a mystery.

"The world is here. You have not come.
You will not go."

•

Mystery is valuable and must be preserved
Heart of the lock the sky
Stones a bread of the woven time
And on trails the vines lock up into lamps
Mystery is valuable and must be preserved

And the soul so light a dense weight
And the soul so light a dense weight
The ticking of the trees, the box of stabs
Shaken
The critical is the penetrant, sidereal, the mystery
The mystery is valuable and must be preserved

Come back from love to crystal lace penetrable
The latches are a moss and arrangement of cliffs
Mystery is valuable and must be preserved
The man on the rock is not there, shock of hair
The combinant rhymes a struck match of lamps
The lamps are a tongue to the eye of the mass
And arrivals are mere, the mocks of a mist
The mystery is valuable and must be preserved

•

What does it mean to capture any thing in a picture?
The Incas worshipped the rainbow. It is said that
their priests threw kisses to the rising sun.
The reasons for things, for coming and leaving.
When I began walking in Machu Picchu I
felt the desire to climb higher in the
ruins. Each time I found myself in
a cul-de-sac from which I could exit only by
retracing my steps. It is said that when no
written language survives "nobody knows." The Incas
are gone but their stones. Sometimes
their sun and their stars.

•

In the stone still lives the Incan night.
You can see it in the line between the
ridge and light. More than lives, is
always nigh. The stir.

•

I have the feeling I'm only partly here
that I'm slipping down behind the images in my mind
and behind them the lamp
that projects what's left of me here.

•

The green snake on the blue rock
the blue snake on the black rock

There is no black snake

Bee Odor

thrumming turns of the trail
sun dropped gorge

There is water in the alley.
There is a tang to the tongue.
The rocks ripped from the leather
of an almost perfect forgettal.
Where voice has been there should be
stone.

Who *are* you?

(repeated blurred into pure vocal tones)

•

I saw man's universe at Machu Picchu and it was
not me. Nor the black millipede cut in two
by the staircase Ginsberg also noticed—there
is no repetition. Now I sit cold in a room
half under the ground in western Massachusetts and
imagine the density of the night, streets of Lima.
The impermeable black eyes, the darkness exhaled
from their noses, a palpable dark that stills things.
To enter on the endless walk that nobody owns.

•

•

Then the Lamp of All the Colors. The blue
walls that are shirts of turquoise. The ore brown
of armed earth. The peaks lit but not warmed by the
sun. The lozenges of stone fit round
by Inca lips. Can't I forget, I can't
be all here.

•

And on the Andean Plain a railway lamp
winking at the high ice. One lone Indian
trudging to the terraced time star.

•

Machu Picchu is already an excavation in my life.

•

and became image-haunted afterwards.

—9IV81-I82

△

Breath

CURTAIN

1. Minimum light on stage littered with miscellaneous rubbish. Hold about five seconds.
2. Faint brief cry and immediately inspiration and slow increase of light together reaching maximum together in about ten seconds. Silence and hold about five seconds.
3. Expiration and slow decrease of light together reaching minimum together (light as in 1) in about ten seconds and immediately cry as before. Silence and hold about five seconds.

CURTAIN

RUBBISH No verticals, all scattered and lying.

CRY Instant of recorded vagitus. Important that two cries be identical, switching on and off strictly synchronized light and breath.

BREATH Amplified recording.

LIGHT If 0 = dark and 10 = bright, light should move from about 3 minimum to 6 maximum and back.

△

Richard H. Abrams

Considering Beckett's Breath

THE FIRST THING you notice is the mechanical regularity, as of a tune played on a music box. A five-point sequence "strictly synchronized" with the illumination and darkening of a stage "littered with miscellaneous rubbish." The soundtrack is echoic, or rather, like a palindrome, bilaterally symmetrical. A baby's cry ("Instant of recorded vagitus"), a ten-second inhalation, a five-second pause, a ten-second exhalation, the same baby's cry. Five seconds of silence before, and five after, frame the sequence. Thus, what's inside confronts what's outside: the silence in third position almost seems concentric with, echoing and anticipating, the silences at either end. Indeed, we might say that the sequence "centers on" the surrounding silence, on what it does not contain.

Beckett's theatrical devices usually feature dissonance, but *Breath* seems to opt for harmony: the strict synchronization of soundtrack and visual reel. As we watch and listen, the stage pulsates like a giant organism, brightening as it takes in air, darkening as it lets it out. The harmonic effect is startling. But, reviewing the sequence, we become aware of incongruity. Visually, Beckett adheres to the structure of a "rounded" life: darkness at the extremes, maximum brightness in the

middle, recalling the birth astride a grave, flashing between womb and tomb, in *Waiting for Godot*. But acoustically Beckett improvises. Naturally enough, a baby's cry opens the sequence; but the same cry of new life oddly concludes it. "Important that two cries be identical," reads the stage direction—but why? If truth were valued over symmetry, we would expect an opposite sound: a death rattle like Murphy's to make amends, gurgles of outflow as from Malone, screaming as in *How It Is* when the questioner drives the answerer to realize his mortality. What does it mean, this cry of beginning terminating the sequence? Is there a moral?

What it seems to mean, but surely cannot, is that a new generation displaces the old. A year or two before *Breath*'s first performance, Stanley Kubrick filmed *2001: A Space Odyssey* with its foetus in the last scene announcing mankind's advent on a new evolutionary stage. Yet what has Beckett to do with affirmations? "If it's lepping . . . it's not mine," said the narrator of the baby in the womb in Beckett's early short story, *First Love*, which similarly ends with the crying of a newborn child. If on the other hand the sequence suggests a single life ending in death with no overflow into future generations, then the baby's cry in terminal position glosses man's fear of mortality with a false hope. In *Romeo and Juliet* "symmetry of conflict" (Sigurd Burckhardt's phrase) insulates the audience from the shock of tragic experience. Does Beckett similarly hedge his tragic bets, sacrificing the truth of how things are to the principle of trim? Under scrutiny, the harmonies of this little play appear desperate, a formal cover-up of internal contradictions.

Our problem centers on the cry of beginning in terminal position—an odd figure for dying which, acoustic symmetry aside, might be better rendered by a scream or death's rattle. But in identifying the final cry as figurative, we are launched unawares on a new interpretative train. For to understand this cry as metaphor, we are thrown back on the first *literal* cry, which we blandly assumed we understood, yet which now becomes problematic. A baby's cry is

normally greeted as a sound of joy; the foetus, we ascertain, has not been delivered stillborn. But from the baby's standpoint the cry expresses agony; it is music of division, which must have been especially clear to Beckett with his reported memories of the caul. "When we are born, we cry that we are come / To this great stage of fools"; or as the narrator of *First Love* exclaims, "What that infant must have been going through!" The cry in fifth position makes us rehear that first cry as the sound of freedom and fear intermingled.

The interplay of two cries is like the interplay of silences: five seconds in the middle, five at either end. By laws of *gestalt* formation, we inevitably conceive the central silence as pregnant, as what the breath flows into and out of. But this sentimental notion of a pregnant silence is deflated by the *blank* silences, of identical measure and tonality, bracketing the sequence. Similarly, when we cease to impose on the first cry, when we hear it as a frightened expression of the baby's *coming to* rather than *from* (Murphy's phrase), it becomes the perfect vehicle of the dying man's mixed emotions in position five. Restructured as a timeless action, the five-point sequence may be said to have neither beginning nor end but to flow out of its own middle toward two identical cries, which are both expressions of ambivalence on release from worlds grown comfortably familiar. Coming and going—the filling and the emptying that seem to be implied in contrary gestures of inhalation and exhalation—are illusory. Breathing in and out is a discrimination that finally makes no difference. And when this illusion of difference is subtracted, what's left over is breath itself. Breath is residual.

Δ

Present Inter Noumenal

Poetry does not serve any more for needs
Since four thousand years it has served feudal archetypes
Since Homer, Aeschylos, Sophocles, Vergil, till Racine, Molière, Shakespeare, Goethe and Hugo, it has served to revive the great EMPTINESS by a heroic IMAGINARY, in a metaphoric language
Poetry of the PRESENT has given up the asiano-mediterranean archetypes
It has given up the HEROES
Poetry of the PRESENT has found the new objectivity of things in the living space
It does not seek any more to explicate phenomenals, be they social or false philosophical
Poetry of the PRESENT does not spring out of fear, it has liberated itself of the world-agony and the ridiculously tragic keeping up of the cunning of struggle for eating
Poetry of the PRESENT understands its objects, the words, as agents of our living space
It gives back to the words and by the words the correspondances of the things before and outside their social and eugenic needs
The poetical (non-musical) sound creates complex dimensions: functional, temporal and numerical, it shows by these inter-relations the "coincidentia oppositorum" of the things by their own value
These values are no ware of social classes, nor of historical aspect
Poetry of the PRESENT is outside the restrained history, outside the coward anthropophagous and anthropomorphous utilisations
PRESENT poetry aims at the relative life of untamed and non-clas-

sified functions, avoiding the false semblances
PRESENT Poetry is neither FOR nor AGAINST, neither classic, nor romantic, nor surrealistic
It integrates BEING and it IS

Poetry Intervenes Now
Presence Is New
PIN

Cauchemar

ch ch ch chchtt chchtt chchtt
chatatatta chatt a chatt tatt
e chnatt ch ch ch batt
batt batt batt battatat
battchnattbattat tt chtt
ch ch ch ch ch ch !
bbg bbgg bggg e
ccccc c! c! c! c!
jjjj ji jjj !
uuut uuutt uttutut fffr ffr fr uuuui i i uuuzzuuuuu
(ggggggg) gg
bbg bbg bgg jjj ji jj zzzuuuu oooooo O !
uuuachtachtj hhh hzz hhzzz ggggzzzggg zgg z' —
kkki i i u kkiuu kki
hha iiiii u hhu hhzz hhzzh hu hhhhhgg gg
jjjjj zzzzzz zzzttttttr ttr u uu hgh
jjjuu iiiiiu jjjuu hhhe ffr fffr frrr tz zz
hhhhgg jjjjii iiii kkkk iiii hhhzzh zz h ggt frr gggttft—
hhj kkh kh h gg ggg ggggkhg
bg
bbg
bbbg gg
bggggg—
gghhhhgh ggh hhhhe gttgt
ggt tt ff ffffrtf fffrrrf rff frff ! cht chchtt
hhh h u uuu oio ou uuachtuachtxex u

jjju fr ffrrfr fr ggzu gzgu usiebensieben
ggggtttt jjjju uu nnnnjnj
nkkkop po öoi –
npokk op iopö hhhu ui
gggz zzgg gz huuuuhu iop
i ooooo i
u uuuuui
ooooo i i
uachtuachtuacht uneunachtsiebenfünfsechssieben
uhuituhuituhuit unineeightsevenfivesixseven
ochomilnuevecientoochentasiete
thihj kkkk klö
uachtu jjj j zuz zzzuz uico uisi uisio
ttttttttsizsizsizsizsizsiz uuuuu uacht uiuzz zz z
tt uiuz zz uuuuhggkzi
gkzhi ggk gr
gr gnrr cnrr
ch ch chtt chatt tattatt !

Three Little Pine Trees

The courtyard was square.

The courtyard squared from west to east and the courtyard squared from north to south.

The courtyard was dark in the morning and in the evening because no sunshine entered it then.

The sun fell into it at midday.

And only in summer.

In winter no noontime sunshine fell into the courtyard.

The sun did not enter the courtyard which squared from west to east, and from north to south, though it was thoroughly quadrangular, because—being a real city courtyard, it was surrounded by high walls towering aloft its four, and no more, sides.

These walls—but let's stick to the courtyard, and not to the walls—one can't stick to walls. And besides, the walls looked as though they were made by a confectioner.

Real sweet-shop walls.

But this square which squared from east to west and from south to north, it was square throughout and throughin. It was altogether square.

It was of the kind of square termed this quadrilateral species.

A pure square.

But people dislike pure things, they want to ignore them, above all those termed pure squares.

The courtyard was nothing but an absolute square.

It wanted nothing but to be an absolute square.
From one side to the west.
From one side to the east.
From one side to the south.
From one side to the north.
Four sides pointing four ways. Four winds.
At the four cardinal points.
East, west, north, south.
In letters—

E W N S
E W N S
W N S E
S N W E
S E W N
N E W S
S E N W
E
eee

s e w n

n e w s
N E W
E W N
S s s
E W N S

This was the song of the courtyard. The square courtyard. Quatuor. Towering frame.

People have ears, but no hearing, and the courtyard had its own square tune. People had no idea how to hear such a tune.

People it was—apparently, had built the courtyard, yet they didn't know how to hear its squareyard tune.

People cannot hear because everything goes in one ear and out the other. If people knew how to hear, they might be able to see too. But people have no idea how to hear or to see.

Savoir voir.

A square is not a square.

A square is a movement. Asquaredly.

Each movement chimes.

A square moves in four sounds.

These sounds—one can hear, see, feel touch, taste them.

Sound.

The movement—people cannot hear, nor see, nor feel, nor touch, nor taste it.

That's why man is called homo sap. followed by a big full stop.

Or ejucated. Culchered.

It's SAP followed by a big full stop, and ejucation that the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting suffer from.

And that's what the courtyard suffered from too.

Many things suffer. Suffragettes. Suffering cats.

The courtyard which sang from west to east and which governed its motion from north to south and which was a pure and absolute quadrangle, and which was never past squaring itself, it moved perpetually from—

E W N S to W E S N
S E W N to N E W S
E w n s

But people dislike it, because they're fed up with the absolute.

They cannot understand it.

They cannot comprehend it.

For how can anyone comprehend and understand a square which chimes to the absolute and governs its own perpetual motion? Huh?

One can hear, see, feel, touch, taste it. But one can neither comprehend nor understand it. One can only comprehend and understand rational notions.

Notions.

Not motions.

The rational notion was conceived by man.

The courtyard is a square in pure, absolute, perpetual motion.
Perpetual movement.
Nobody can understand this.
Nobody can comprehend this.
Only eyes can hear this.
Only a tongue can see it.
Only ears can feel it.
This is the way in which it can be experienced:

W	W	W	W
E			
N			
S			
S	E	W	N
W	E	N	S
W	E	S	N
S	E	N	W
N	E	W	S

That's what the square sings.
One sees that.
One feels it.
One can actually taste it.
I cannot comprehend it.
I am unable to understand it.
No notion in it.
No sense in it. Nonsense.
There's nothing in it but sensually pure, perpetual, absolute motion.

Because the courtyard was square. The courtyard squared from west to east and the courtyard squared from north to south. The courtyard was dark in the morning and in the evening because no sunshine entered then. The sun only fell in at noon in the summertime because the courtyard was a real city courtyard, surrounded by high walls from its four, and no more, sides.

The courtyard could not stick to its walls. The walls looked like confectionary walls, and the courtyard which squared from east to west and from north to south was square throughout and throughin. It was of the kind of square termed this quadrilateral species.

A pure, mobile, perpetual quadrangle. But people dislike pure squares, because they neither see nor hear. All they know is understanding and comprehending.

To conceive of the square, acts had to be done in it.

Real events.

Called dustbins.

One cannot see them. Extraordinary. Bins.

Three little pinetrees live in front of them.

The three little pinetrees are no courtyard.

They live in the courtyard.

In front of the dustbins. Most extraordinary. Bins.

One cannot see them.

One only sees them when dustmen come to empty them.

Dustmen real men.

Then the little pinetrees stay put.

And then people think:

> "My lovely pinetree, my looverly pinetree
> King of the forests, Thou king of the fforests
> How I adore Thy verdure, verdure of yore."

That's how people understand comprehending.

That's how people comprehend understanding!

That's why the dustbins stand in the courtyard behind the three little pinetrees, and the three little pinetrees stand in front of the dustbins.

Can you hear?

Can you see?

Can you feel?

Can you taste?

Can you touch?

Three little pinetrees in a square.

London Onion

Variations about the theme of the Thames valley

I

LONDON
Ell Ou enn De Ou enn.
Ell
Ell Ou
Ell ou enn
Ell Ou enn enn
Ell Ou enn enn
Ell Ou enn enn
Ell Ou enn enn
De Ou enn
Ou enn
enn
enn enn
Ell Ou enn De Ou enn
enn Ou Ell enn Ou De
Ou Ell
Ou De
Ou Ell
Ou De
Wra.
Ou De
Wra
Ou Ell
Tackelamit

Wra
London
Wra

II

Onion
Opinion
Zegoday
Onion
Opinion
Zegodayda
Onion
Opinion
Zegodaydatoo
Zegodaydataa
Onion
Opinion
Zegodaydatuu
Zegodaydatau
Too taa
Tuu taa
Too taa
Tuu taa
Zegodaytatuutaa
Prrrr!
Tootagrö.
Te tear
U uncle
Agrö
Tootagrö
Tootagrö mesens
Tootagrö mesans
Tootagrö tear
Tootagrö tear mesens
Tootagrö tear mesans

Tootagrö uncle
Tootagrö uncle agrö
Prrrr!
How item King
C Charley
D Dog
L Love
L London
Love London
I love
Dog Charley
I Dog.
Dog Love
I Dog Love London Charley.
Onion
Opinion
Ell Ou Enn De Enn Enn
Ell Ou Enn De Enn Enn
Ell Ou Enn De Err Err
Ell Ou Enn De Err Err
De Ou enn
De Ou enn
Ou enn
enn.
Prrrr.
What is your verdict?
Verdict A
Verdict Be
Verdict A
Verdict Be
Ell.
Oh, my sweetest Toots,
I don't care two hoots,
When I clap and clap
My trap on your trap!
Ell Oh enn De Oh enn.

Zegodayda!
Zegodayda!
Zegodayda!!!

Just in the middle of her knee
There I observed the fact that she,
Possessed a little reddisch mole
It was alone, just one and sole.

And even if there had, may be,
Been two, which were just on her knee,
Just in the middle would be one
(In fact in does)
A fact that I would beg you to discuss.

Be ll arr Aa enn
Bee
Bee Aa
Bee Aa ar
Bee Aa arr arr
Bee Aa arr arr
Bee Aa arr arr
Bee Aa arr arr
Ell Oh enn enn
Ell Oh enn enn
Ell Oh enn enn
Ell Oh enn enn
De Ou enn
Arr Aa enn
Beran
London
Teckalamit.

from *The English Poems of Kurt Schwitters*, 1946

Kurt Schwitters & Raoul Hausmann, who often collaborated into their later years, were each that mix of poet & artist typical of DADA & related movements. The range of Schwitters' writings is in fact awesome & only recently brought together in the four-volume *Das Literarische Werk* (Dumont Verlag). By the early 1920s he was making extensive experiments with sound poetry, visual & concrete poetry, mixed media collages using words & letters, pop poetry, number poetry, collaged poems & novels, & various projections for a total theater of mixed means he was never able to realize. As a successor to DADA, he called his one-man movement MERZ, & he celebrated it, along with the death of DADA, in a great sculptural collage work, the Merzbau (= MERZ column = Cathedral of Erotic Misery), which he constructed in his house in Hannover & twice rebuilt during World War II exile in Norway & in Ambleside (England). From the late thirties to his death in 1948, he abandoned German &, as here, wrote in English.

In the soundworks in particular, Hausmann preceded Schwitters & practiced throughout a more "modernist" fragmentation as against the almost classic formalism of a work like Schwitters' monumental *Ursonate*. A true survivor, he was rediscovered by younger avant-gardists of the 1960s & 1970s, & his performances of soundworks were extensively recorded by S-Press & others until his recent death. —*J.R.*

Δ

Madeleine Burnside

Three Pieces

FIRST PARAGRAPH

Credited to the Greeks, the discovery of that cure-all moly, that lotus-of-the-less by which to exorcise our greatest loves and return to those who love us, almost whole. This is what the classics were prescribed for, their most sublime passages open only to interpretation, versions of those symbols which linger after the creation of the word. Like great wines, opiates, island voyages, residences in the South, these texts serve as an intoxication unmatched, a distraction.

What had his teachers conspired to hide, right from the start, when they made their selections from history, literature, mathematics —what masteries had they learned, only to discard? If he could have read between the lines, would he have realized that the opening sentence of the primer was notice of the time he would have to spend serving their ideas, or that illustrations were always lines they drew to sever themselves from that which they felt safe in despising?

A skill would be taught in terms of prejudices that required no pause to inculcate. His knowledge was a tool such that not only crimes against others were committed when, in his lessons, he understood. He learned the first law of physics and metaphysics: to be grasped rigorously by analysis. The success of his education could be measured when the caricature of the cow commented-on in the text failed to offend his bovine sensibilities.

MISSING PAGE

Here are the secret misdeeds enumerated, this is the catalogue of wounds inflicted, their scars measured with calipers. This is how we know they know they hurt us. This is where we would have found the names of all those in the execution party, and of their murderers, and of their single assassin.

Here are entries to convince us of the sincerity with which the experiments were admired, the fine judgement exercised in the count of days, the human error in calculating the voltage of the shocks.

Here are the file numbers of the films they made of each other, grouped alphabetically according to acts committed: bastinado, bestiality, cannibalism, copraphilia. Here is the diary which records what they were forced to watch, what they were able to bear.

Here are the meticulously ordered steps by which he pushed her to dependence, then addiction; here are the carefully planned stages by which she made him think himself mad; here is the numerological explanation of the stab wounds; the logic by which they claimed that what they read led them to this; their list of victims, both missing and dead.

Here are the infamous treaties, now denied. Here is the information too volatile to be classified, concerning how we hurt them, rendering our apologies ironic. Here is neither speaking nor implying, but a hidden agenda and a secret report. That these acts were never spontaneous is here proven, from this may be inferred responsibility and a period of interest, or inspection, or approval. The destruction of this page need not suggest shame, but a change in the rules under which justification might be possible, an arbitrary swing of history, not between morals but manners.

Finally, this is not the destruction of an inferior drawing nor the guided or misguided discarding of previous work, nor a gesture of self-despair, but a ledger of deliberate acts which will itself be burned, torn, shredded, even physically devoured and defecated, in fear.

By convention a blue line indicates a river, this pattern of vertical strokes locates the marshland embraced by meanders and horseshoe lakes, and this intense area of virgules states, according to the key, the area and population of the town situation to the north-east of this map.

Use of this coded information is tied to those occasions for which these symbols are adequate: while they might serve to guide the reader on a walking tour, they would not answer the purposes of an amateur geologist, and to the tourist interested in history they would offer little or no insight into the character of the district.

Correspondances between past and present, or the influence of the one upon the other, are the very matter omitted by the map. There are, for example, no references to the physical alterations which encouraged conversion from transhumance to agriculture—the encroachment of the river that first drowned the arable land and then, withdrawing, increased its fertility—nor to the course by which the bronze-age settlement became a strategic fortress and later an industrial center.

It is in this way that the map and its code misleads the viewer as to the nature of the surface and the substrata which it purports to discuss. Most significant of all in this context is the lack of reference to the great forest that once stood only a few miles to the south of the town. The influence of the forest on the early development of the region can hardly be overstated, yet neither the superficial characteristics of the modern landscape, nor the map which charts them, in any way takes into account this notable absence.

It is the ironic commentary of history that this map will itself become outdated and its geography inapplicable to the later topography of the place. Future maps will refuse responsibility for the details it records, and its inappropriate remarks will themselves speak to the process of oblivion, the failure of all symbols to have a meaning which endures.

A blue line indicates the river, but on a global scale it is too small to be named. The question before the cartographer is, how nearly must the river be physically approximated or approached in order to signify? An unnamed blue line barely supports our notion of a real existence, and can hardly be expected to uphold the corollaries of history (her barge, his birthplace?) or myth, nor does it itself testify to the ability of any map to bear sufficient witness. Further, will the endurance of a location prove the acts of either the inhabitants or the map-maker to have their own continuing reality, will a space mark time with the impression of conversations, thoughts, emotions?

△

Ark 39
The Roswell Spire

for Donald Anderson

of
orchestra
flor rayd
chest

hosts

In cumulus stem,
Wm. Blake quizzing past gangplank a jetstream
(all news
from out the eaves of heaven)
and floors like The Great Speckled Bird
lighting all get out
labeled: 'A spirit within another spirit, each one singing'
as lined snake slide side to side
neverrest
pulse's smelter, smith, and alchemist
perhaps as apse
shuddered its thereabouts

measured against
sole heart hoist its triply peaked blip blip blip best lightly saddled
by the featherers Fountainhead, Brainstorm, and Target
bearing horsesense backwords and fourwards
some planar Bermoothes
now asterisk of sun way past one shoulder,
now plains daisy
half trod on
sprung sway its original position,
now dead ahead
(swirls before pine)
"Speak up" orders The Lord:

for the day is at hand
when as if you've seen one sunset you'll seem Them all
dancing without a stitch such pure litparticled
particolor perimeterings we'd hear
now cow low,
now tall tales hence still dawn give tongue to Helen, gone
(or Mahler hid full oleander for
that matter)
now snug
one settler's toted wonderstone to stand up proud on
for the Pasture himself is coming
ever more

apt people steepled
dawn manned
'temenos' (that which altars itself)
fashioned as wired combustions of the Incombobulus
stumping those salt bushes, rose tangles, this yucca clump,

so built
(peeling a corner sun seen to frieze series of whiskered wheatstalk)
"allye allye outs in free"
"allye allye outs in free"
"allye allye outs in free"
cements relationship

withon
do words' work
—sustained sequentially as to insistance, instances stilled—
say, who keep their jubilee in easy reach
by birdsong held the day long
like a kitestring
ear to ear
and above all children, children hard at pretend ends
in an attic nothing if not intricate
tier on trellis tier
what music makes its way through us, which
scarlet trumpet vine

hard put to describe in words
we are The Abecedarium,
or matter's plumb,
we once in the lilacs off Einstein's porch slept
a season as hornet's nest
talking turkey to Thoreau the while awake

one whole long recorded autumn
as would a surface composed compasses first whirl then align
add just one compass
(part reverberated out pared utter's math of push,
part split through spirit you call 'path')
if testify

won now
Fall and Flood
hence seem a wind down half wild field it feed new senses
gardening that otherwise
sheer lilac piled blood shed land
pulled us
toe stub steeped in attention
down days a shake of slight lights quite unalike
corner after spiral corner, all multiplied
stairs squared air
mid violin, lens, loved line, dove, divers voids, lives lived,
of these, image a nation

rared abundantly from the sun
may thunder married
Kirlian Carillon
—rung beyond violet's calyx, octaves scalloped below geranium—
(an explosion of fire-works slowed eleven hundred times)
old elms so briefly leaved

our years might seem a finger's simple palsy,
some wilder parley from atom to star
to move men long ahead

change age,
catch mane but a moment's game,
ride the pale wind

adjust suppose enjoy define transform
about mounts it
(every shape stirrup to many a force)
how Sordello a spire, of such dark lustre in varied burning hurry to
spur head about
compelled who to change a world by song alone
take root, bronze wings
riddling all kingdom come, like a worm a field, fished up
by the olden open jaw
back first,
& large as life
in a gape of being

△

A Sandworm Emerging

This is a hundred yard
dash.
I am racing the alphabet.
I am calling myself
in a loud voice.
I lay hidden in a
southern delta
expelled like a
placenta.
I squirm to see
Sacré Coeur.
The next day
all comes to pass.
In an hour I predict
desire.
This wisdom is ordinary,
visible.
Day, week, month
innocent as an
explanation.

I wonder about oil,
the manufacturing of
whalebone girdles
that women in the 19th
century wore.

I think about their
sweat, knuckles
rubbing, imprints on
the hips,
various as signs of
the zodiac.

A crisis waits near
an ulcerated leg.
It is finished.
It causes caseworkers
to venture beyond the
call of duty, to
astonish themselves
to survey the decay.

I will move
over the sand.
A solution is
my next impulse,
a sandworm emerging
again and again.
Fission breaking,
the principle of
combinations, elements
dangerous, mental
crucibles
striking fire.
Pearls in my glowing
hands.

I remember the woman
in mutton-sleeves who

breathed scalding steam.
The rare earth she walked.
Passion, laughter,
angular jaw, sufi smile,
eyes of Mona Lisa.
She meditated on fuel
shortage, a way to
lighten the load.
Would you spend money
on a ruptured camel?
To wind up at the bend
of a crater,
the cargo buried
in sand.

Wrapping it up in Montmartre,
a haunting mosaic of
sensations, algerian meat-pies,
a country road,
an ambitious motor accident,
the blood on the tall
dead grass forming
circles, crickets eating
yellow flowers,
balancing & singing.
A nerve in the body
of Sacré Coeur.

△

M A R W A N

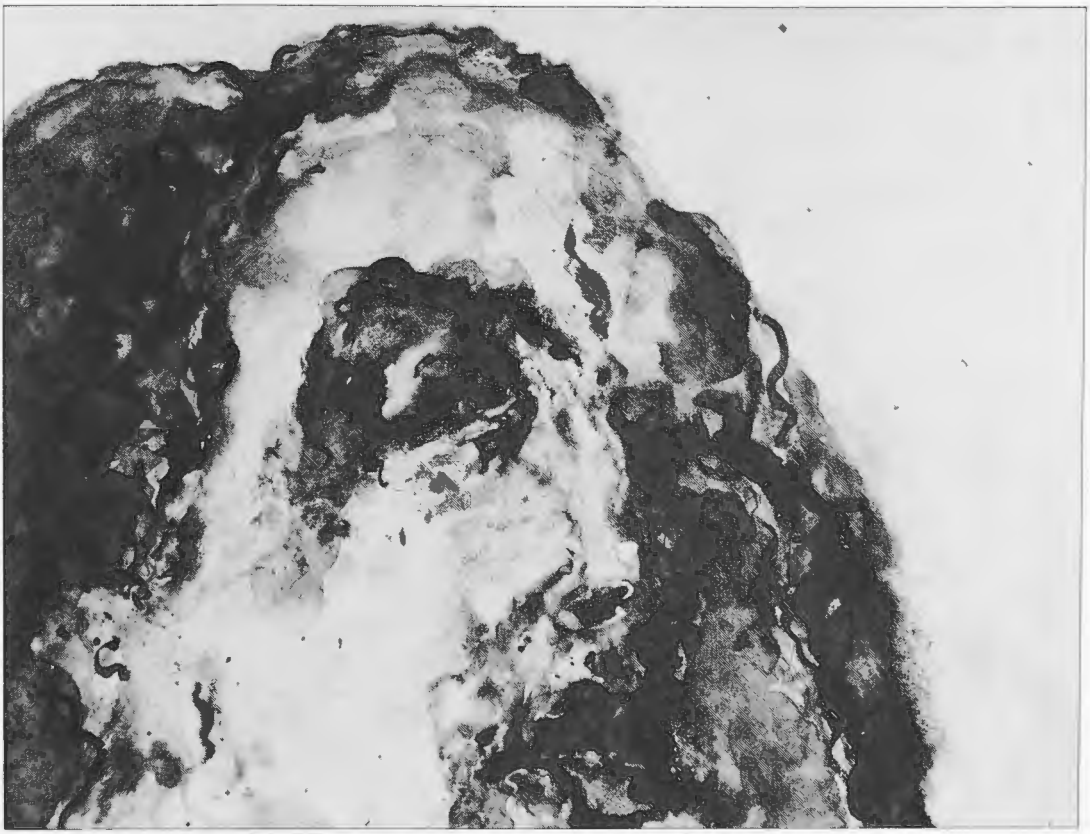
Figure with Sheet, oil on canvas, 1971

Figure with Veil, oil on canvas, 1971

Head with Sheet, oil on canvas, 1972

Head, oil on canvas, 1972

Head with Veil, oil on canvas, 1973



Head, aquarelle on paper, 1975

Gene Frumkin

Six Poems

For Those Who Dream Of Love

O it is a radiant dimension
that slit in the pear of sex
its duality
clings to your lips
and whatever you say cannot describe the twin halves of brain and heart
how the depth of your incision reaches to the core
or how you cut yourself
completely out
Either side divides both ways
and either side glitters
with all the capacious arrogance of indecision
O it calls to you
this luminous fruit
it calls so openly from between its limbs
and there you are
on the other side of the world! the perfect listener

It calls as readily as April calls to May
when the phallus
still cold as the North Pole
breaks its skin
and history inquires of the elements: Is this a flowering?
You know then how stark
is the need to stitch your stumps together To live is to deliver yourself
without crying
from an indifferent womb

△

Reject From A Marxist Anthology

Earth collected as a body of sweat value preserved in the passage of an immigrant
through a crowd of animals torn by the pantomime of jackals attacking genitals
which is the effect
of a turbine
Blindfolded, the tailer from Kovno enters the room where a strong passivity sits
waiting
He is the boiler room in a banquet by Leger
he sweats and ruby water
drips from his skull
he is the spigot of a wine-barrel

You who are the audience are a closet drama in which the clothes of your dreams
stink of unlaundered bodies after a millennium unfertilized
On a cloud the white-haired tailor still mends
apertures in the cosmos
and will prolong the needle
until the wind settles
into its iron flower
when time accedes to a fingernail
when the morning opens with a voluntary by William Byrd
when earth is a table in the engine-room of love
all fruits and fishes
packed hard into whatever stranger's muscle
No one departs until the knob comes off
in the police chief's hand

△

The Renaturing Cycle

Dreaming is the psyche itself
doing its soul-work.
—JAMES HILLMAN

Slowly the axe grows crazy in catalpa wood
slowly the bole grows out of itself

out of earth
it narrows down from simple standing
into a bent sleep
The axe is brilliant in the shadows a blade streaking silver through mottles of sun
it is action a fierce energy merciless
though later
the axe will also tip against plankwall
no light entering then its place of depth
and there leaning into sleep will be helpless as dried and sullied seaweed
A thing this tested instrument alone unto its acts
undergrown by older life
back then ages back
that blackmoon country

The tree roots itself in virginal sky
a capsized umbrella
whose shade is white and warming a warning, axe:
the undertow of objects
(like the human night-soul) pulls counter the tides
Everything survives in the negative
The day forgets

△

Arbitrary Design

Hickory nuts lie smashed in fallen powdered leaves
Someone is preparing a charm
will sprinkle on gooseberries
phlox and sauce of papaya
Galapagos-egg saltspray grass of sorrow
then stir until ready to cook
'A foolish arbitrary design':
the wind carries these words to me
in caravans of snow everything has shifted from long ago
extensions, a traveling
That's fine
When one is ravenous for love
even the corpse of snow
inspires an embrace
and one moment for the teeth to flare
flare out, dying
matchboxes
sucked into the stars
our crushed and mangled stars

△

'Something'

We want this to be about 'something'
a fact if possible
or at least
a simulation
detachable
like an organ from the spherical music
from the supernal flesh
It's how one says it
the system
where we live
our crowded intestines
reels of film entangled, cutting into one another
no longer separable
as images

Why then prolong this terminal discourse
about 'something'?
It is enough to assent
that heaven is androgynous
and we are issues formed in time
dyadic and processional
Drapes around a nude figure
in stone or air

Script

Miracle of the worm
permutation out of earth into
syllables
lines of thought vocable as trails of semen in the dust
worm who struggles from silence with deliberate gymnastics
to erupt in time as the marvelous snake
seducer of woman
corrupter of man
through a speech so concealed in the flora of its consonance
so elusive in desire
that the grasping brain could not construe the physical de-formation of its blueprint
that very one it laid out on wild grass with ancient subtlety
saying: 'Here is the world'

Earthworm, superb syllabus of intellect
one wriggle in the twitch of an eyelid
you will never open your magisterial heart to butterflies hairsprays colorblindness
and such creatures of mind as Freud and the Surrealist Manifestos
all of which exist through human sympathy objectively
as bodies in the human environment

We must believe, worm of tongues
ambassador of divine monarchy

that footnote

which encloses all the stories ever given voice
for a script of intercourse
consummated only in your sucking mouth where the end is endlessly secreted

△

Washington's Birthday

A cast down
sword of sunlight
rests its crumpled point
on sleeping Basil
brings up his colors
wheaten and grizzle.
The clouds roll over
like milk in water.
More milk than water.
The country is far
away under nickel
browned over, snowed under
lavender hollows and red
branches like fresh scratches.
Bay State Road
enough gritty new
snow to hold
footprints. Younger, I
was here to visit
the dentist, tilted
back in his chair
and again at a meeting
of angry teachers
during the war.
A man said,
"College finances are

a can of worms
they keep in the
ground." Got me
in trouble later
when I threw
the line at my
friend's father, a
lawyer, and he
nearly took my
head off. Chocolate
cake soiled the
white pants I
wore. The light
darkens around these
instant, dispatched
snapshots. Tire tracks
cross the snow
like friction tape.
There is mist
on The Castle windows.
Bob's black moustache
and goatee, his sign,
is lost in gray.
He must raise
his soft voice.
And mist there was
on the windshield
of Schwartz's Chevy
wiped off with a glove
returning from that
hockey game at Canterbury.
I sat in the death seat
flipping through Pound's

Selected Poems I had
brought mostly for show
when I came upon
the Chinese poems and
by the open glove
compartment's light I could
hardly concentrate for
the excitement I felt.
Looking down, looking up
there was a lighted
window above me clear
and *on* the dark
we passed. I did not know
nothing will be
the same. No friend
true. No love
does not change.

△

Claude Gauvreau

from Entrails

Translator's Note: *Entrails* is a collection of 26 dramatic objects, some of them published during Claude Gauvreau's lifetime but most never in print before they appeared in a massive posthumous tome called *Oeuvres créatrices complètes*, edited by Parti Pris in Montreal in 1977. Nothing quite like these objects can be found anywhere else in Canadian literature, French or English. They deliberately affront every convention of the stage, showing us a world of intransigent fantasy, symbolic and mysterious, funny at times, often horrific, always disturbing. They were written between 1944 and 1946, in a Montreal not at all ready for them, by a poet who was nineteen years old when he began. Gauvreau has since become almost a cult figure in Quebec, but he is probably no better understood now than when outraged audiences laughed and jeered at his plays and poetry.

The great challenge of these works, especially for the translator, is in their language. Gauvreau at first seems to practice the kind of automatic writing he may have heard about or even read in André Breton's *First Manifesto of Surrealism*. . . This is the associational, dream-like, lyrical language seen in French Surrealist writing, where unpredictable, spontaneous images bring forth that coveted spark of surprise and wonder. The reader is forced to deal, not with statements in a dramatic dialogue forming an action, but with a phrase, or even a word, which demands attention simply because it is not absorbed in an obvious context. Needless to say, this causes difficulty for the translator, who relies heavily on context as the major clue for deciding how to render a given word or phrase.

[Early in these works], Gauvreau begins experimenting with a type of automatic writing he was convinced took him beyond Breton and the majority of French Surrealists. From a background of what we might call classically automatic language, there suddenly appear spurts of pure sound, like 'Hah-ba-ba-pals-flah' or 'Anga-Touya-Sahia.' As we progress through

the book, coined words and strange 'portmanteau' constructions, as Lewis Carroll called them, become more and more common. A major leap takes place in 'Apolnixède Between Heaven and Earth' where the opening speech introduces a very rich half-regular, half-phonetic language mixed with phrases like the nonsense refrains of songs. This is the first heavy use of what Gauvreau calls his 'image exploréenne.'

Gauvreau distinguished four basic types of poetic image: the *image rythmique* (rhythmic image), which is basic to the sound of poetry, involving both onomatopoeia and stress; the *image mémorante* (reflective image), which is the standard metaphor or comparison between similar elements; the *image transfigurante* (transformational image) which involves a strained comparison actually transforming its elements, creating a new compound, but whose elements are still traceable (this applies to most Surrealist images); and the *image exploréenne* (explorational image) as practiced by Gauvreau and a few other writers, perhaps Antonin Artaud, Arthur Cravan and Tristan Tzara. Here the basic elements are completely modified and can no longer be easily traced by analysis. The problem for a translator is obvious. These are images which are not meant to be comprehended in the traditional manner; word-fusions difficult or impossible to analyse and hence impossible to translate with any confidence. And throughout the last half of *Entrails*, explorational images or passages of 'non-figurative' language, which Gauvreau likened to the paintings of his fellow 'Automatistes,' are mixed with more conventional phrases. In the most extreme example, 'Trustful Fatigue and Reality,' Gauvreau's language is almost entirely explorational and I have decided to leave the French text untranslated. In all other cases I try to give a credible English version. In fact, the percentage of extremely difficult passages is quite small, so even though the poet may be betrayed by the translator in some details, the general effect is faithful. As the language of the original becomes more non-figurative and free, so does the translation; it has to, I have nothing to rely on but my own intuitions. All things considered, I have probably erred on the side of conservatism, but if my English text conveys Gauvreau's energy and extravagance, if it suggests the demands he makes on his readers by battering at their linguistic walls, then it will have done its job. It should give a clear enough idea of the dramatic objects themselves, but beware of coming to specific conclusions about the language of any passage without consulting the original.

—Ray Ellenwood

Apolnixède Between Heaven and Earth

Apolnixède Entre le Ciel et la Terre

Translated from the French by Ray Ellenwood

[A man is digging in the mud with his arms. It is Apolnixède.]
APOLNIXÈDE: Now brook myjellisdance
The bits, the butts offeye finance.
Down downadown come the time when pallor downs the adon.
Downim in the paradeye of the dry lyin.
I'm dying chiefs. to the god of craifs.
Apolchidance. Craprie ovgreen.
Air clean on the greenfeed screen.
[The deaf woman draped in veils floats in the yellow air.]
And their izere to the son of the Even Eeng.
Down downadown derry down to the slogg of the eiderdowns.
Downim in the paradeye of the lyin.
Pit to the pit of the undarm. They will speak the tongue of the kneeling drept.
Oh heath above the bourdened winter.
Zedourkamouellan.
Downoni weedzona bobanis.
Dow dow oh downa.
Chance ov cattance.
Pâcri du moul chédène.
Beans blarney barbs.
Grievance phlebiance.
So be the camerons who don of the pulselet will sing the subjisted

battle of the fariton Allas of the mouldecs in pinion. Oh Lari of the Vel of Ans camiou viah! Chen do du bellac mio.

Razito Vitalli.

The breathe fault lake will be brown at the rise of the islands.

Fraternus down den or pardon to the sol-fa. The vigilantalgood-men watch over the writing of sleeps.

Oh Lilacs oh jasmin.

All proud.

Mari a tella azanas cella.

Pourké mita li.

O zella qui mira Latila.

Axernas figilli ourabi.

The dromedary plants come mali on the run. Muzbe the chum of Allenson's breton friend.

Thimportant arista counterfreezing the humidor of patrer crizella.

O Marihaver watch thewor.

'Twas so nice on the pott.

I move the hoops hopeless trot. Nought but deliverance of liberty.

The canoes cruze down the flue.

On the twindle sains revol.

Atarro ati midar. Siholi ferrec zaloi. Madja therra.

Zi inn zoum za oun zoum zoun

Fedrec fatra.

THE DEAF WOMAN: Fol fol folderol Fol lol derol lol

Jigella saw the hard art

Whose is the azure

Pure

Stream the dreams beyond the fertile illfame.

Shut off from the world I hear the ellipse of sedentious parties.

Oh guemen gueten guejen

Shut off from the inndawn I finger the eternal which is butchered by usury.

The eternal entire, the eternal preserved.
For the Begua children
For the sudan blocks
For the accents of the megas
For the frump of the tegelments.
The zealous aroma sets the rhythm of the parsley sheaves.
Shut off from all of it. In a cage where the cricket with the velvety essences ferments.
I survey the demi-monde.
The enflap of halfmeasures.
Met ah la kla Gré dlon gon gré dlon gon honne
APOLNIXÈDE: Me i or a so guitra.
Suspends rachel buttoneered.
The fresh scents that the adis give off. Edidon malanche tab.
Zalziou téfel cader.
Palsoma the alban crests.
They'll see their childhood again.
[He begins to extricate one corner of a painting from the mud.]
The grey veined elpiro will come out of the shed.
Thus spake Andi.
Oh metdals! azured.
The grand prize of the cofari will rise up from the campri soil.
The stars are dancing.
The stars are dancing on his back.
The stars run down his back.
Oha! The mul that roles where the apcule went mum.
Where the ebor killed itself.
The stars role over his back.
Avri kemer colour of streets.
It will be sowing in winter.
The eve of the carillon.
Thezeber unner campanil from the cask of the analbass tings.
They will close the grud of the vases.

Zout sou din zout sa sou dou
Krébébin krébeu békeu
At the ancalus' fair.
It will rise up even because.

THE DEAF WOMAN: Assi essi assa
Saw saw saw
Pstiso pstiso at the turning where the evels rundle
Where the goodbye swaddles
Swills the balm of the gullish hoar-frosts.
All abord for tardy frequencies.
Liberated seagulls, untrammelled seagulls, purified seagulls.
The tomb sprinkles itself with the white of their feet.
The gayling of odalisk regret shatters the übernackle.
Afrégua ofulgod zélissino
Eugeuhum agutte troub poutlougua émeher hersi kouklo
Haye!
Harse
Venella fradulcu vénéher!

[The deaf woman begins to dig along with Apolnixède. She sinks into the mud and disappears.]

[Apolnixède extracts the painting from the mud. Nothing can be seen clearly on it. The mud spattered on it forms indistinguishable outlines. Apolnixède hangs the painting in the sky. Curious onlookers begin to gather slowly around the painting. They take no part in the action. A few of them walk with their heads down. They all look the same, they blend together.]

APOLNIXÈDE: Childhood frood.
Litzig choudra al ekka when the pontiffs will bareass the boots of the zarnes.
Amildotte chégued tannedex.
Alerne caherne my bat will philo.
Ranchiképel. Give me the ford of swathers. To the dolefulling eyelash.

To the beach of the be.
Of the o di.
Of the premite kiss.
Alinthe which will suturate the sponges of the forniculating johns.
Gobo tebal farni.
Ah the star.
The riverfords the dog-vanes the strawmbrosias the coxidales.
Crackled avragui of Silence permissile freedom.
Avranimul. He hardly thinks.
Wadeover.
The embers counterbalance the ovary of the precarious emulators.
The sodan songs of the forest.
The meulic fits.
The Trous.
Kifa alfa Feroni fuldux.
The berbe will berb if the Zions sedolnite.
Zionism izmacropate.
The child sighs galzing the nut.
Jupir emereldo cavuhidante.
Libra doveu.
Paltrize the gullcake of the marblecrock.
Guigelela guiguelele guiguele guila.
The sun gumdrapes in the silus of the frogid palves.
Aguévasse ô meurde.
Silcha crea authernagon.
O fath o fath o fath in heaven in heaven in the stelbert in the stallion in the
stall-keeper
In the cunt
Holymolargoshengollygoodsies.
[The onlookers drift away.]
[The stars come down suspended on threads. They light up the painting making the outlines clear and allowing us to see a young

man with a horse's head who is tearing out his eyes in front of a huge blank sheet of paper.]

THE YOUNG MAN: A foo the fools I'm in pain.

[Apolnixède takes the hand of the young man with the horse's head and leads him out of the painting. The young man floats around Apolnixède like a satellite.]

THE YOUNG MAN: Womo
Womo
Teul Teul
Maki-er-erhunnn-h
Va hi jhi ha jhi kwhih
Her her
Meuleude

[The young man bursts into tears and Apolnixède is covered with unbearably bright gold. The young man plunges his hands into the mud and brings some to his lips. Apolnixède rises into the air in a heavenly ascension.]

APOLNIXÈDE: Brother, brother charity is eternal.

CURTAIN

Trustful Fatigue and Reality

Fatigue et Réalité sans Soupçon

Keulessa Kyrien Cobliéniz Jaboir
Veulééioto Caubitchounitz Ableóoco
Vénicir Chlaham Kérioti Kliko
Sannessa vélo Moutchnaïk Révoi
Kharinaïne bénessoir sellèr achmatz
krioun alégo amemor ripiutz leslé
aglradine noeutéon paklica erremmetz
djackliane mandousse petréobor
nochnéagriawa sétel-sel clariassener
jôquoimoil nontonduc allessande rébrér
novaképalès Djvoriadjiana Kuntroubel
tétrapaïte jonsel nilâcouâ alrivage
akdoc cousine-germaine déplaatz
circuitz monse dobo lévil-clair
palosse-pensée moulmolosse adjeuate
Kénoice Salibleuwié Aklistantan
Schnlouem Jakonitz Eulbéka Krôhenn
LaToilia Dédjoitonte Wanékoin
Lite-gazère Goitena Chapelle automatique

CURTAIN

[Note: This text has been left untranslated because there are so few specific words suggested by its sound-clusters. Some exceptions are 'pensée' (thought), 'cousin-germaine' (first cousin, female) and 'Chapelle automatique' (automatic chapel). The last may be a reference to the 'Automatiste' group, which was sometimes referred to, mostly by critics, as a chapel or sect.]

The Shadow On The Hoop

L'Ombre sur le Cerceau

[Monologue of the shadow cast on a hoop by a leaping acrobat.]
THE SHADOW: Listen to the harvest of Belval and the thuriferous fork which has come to glean the careful rows of pupazzi pastiches and an-glioche-glicoche and Bux the Clown ejaculating trapeze and cross- bow, and the brother's lips and the old-mother wrinkle and the sister of the brother's stag, become a pupazzo, become an advertising avalanche, tacit and bitter and baynal landslide in addition to acid of linseed and skull of oil's soul with instructive painterly mastication. The acorns of joy the tinkling bells cry papou and beuzellin and anarchist with the snotty plastic nose theological antiquation and abnegation of the tocsin watering trough, smooth and crystalline pale blue mirror like the virginal apple of the martyr clerk in his springtime escalade, buffandesque, heroicomanic and vermilion of pure gosling.

Your pompedear Cleonte in her populist and overthrow cloud, that cantankerous and diaphanous frantic flying coat, white, white, white, black toes on that blight, on that euphemie, the crossroads of faithful crosses and the cough akchou ekribitchou ploum ploum of the cordlings of crayfitious asbestos.

Ogo Absalum. The disproportionate medals and scapulars surround and ransom this spot of white skin on the wall of pamenver

gray. The new cross-breeds rip the bilious feeding, the vinegary slobbering, out of the faggot tongues, diapers for the stomachs, acrebungs for the armour cartridges immured in the attained psychol half-dawn circle of the visceral pelt, of the micreagondic touch of the Pals of Elmeuze of the Kingdom of Ki who blay the Ostaches Cumulé and Serval. Onward lances and tale dice, counts and burlurettes, the family of hesitated means, of abandoned attempts, of one-eyed compatures, of ossified regulations. Burman crusade. Bones of sentimental anthologies, rubbings of the amorous eruption. Onward the bagatelle of the dear corduroy pompom of the glacial blue and of the crystallization of porous orifices, of the stylinisation and synthetinisation of these molassous greens perpetually in motion, chain and breast of jealousy.

The baby-faced Zut and the buffoon Clément in the footlight, the cracker's fireworks, the moss-grown snow and the ice palisade of the tutus, they all elementize and isolate the pervers hunch-backed detonating gasoline. Baby-face and the skirt's wheel whip the spanish-style cream again, and the orange laugh of my pantheresque wife cut and pasted on her wax face adorns the monarchist behind of the paschal cabinet-maker by his checkered wig. Serrated jew-girl, muskapantulous forest, hothouse and carbanturier, the bream pastoral fulmine, spikes and waters right-handed, dampens and pecorates the sorcerish acquiescences, and the Ocean grinds its teeth on the platform of human tastes.

Abrdoum Pou King, the verdigris and the engerminating roof beams, sincerely stainted, bend and stain the Olme and the Prkades of the seat and of the agrable ombezeres' celon, royal comedy, fameloid burlesquery, pioune and pitouzery, who guard and fuss over the learned eliteries, who robe and flisk the cumus and hand some holes

of the pots and pans, of the cabiton's eagles, the opulent ruins the corpulent detentions, and who underline on imperial days the zing and echo and madrigal sol of the dishevelled circles who hash the fictional space.

Agroupine. Almah palm the pinch chireeps, the algaesia of the planks sings at the top of its glass under the melodious spell of the siphon.

CURTAIN

Lydia Davis

The Mouse

FIRST A POET WRITES a story about a mouse, in moonlight in the snow, how the mouse tries to hide in his shadow, how the mouse climbs up his sleeve and he shakes it down into the snow before he knows what it is that is clinging to his sleeve. His cat is nearby and her shadow is on the snow, and she is after the mouse. A woman is reading this story in the bath. Half her hair is dry and half of it is floating in the bath water. She likes the story.

That night she can't sleep and goes into the kitchen to read another book by the same poet. She sits on a stool by the counter. It is late and the night is quiet, though now and then at some distance a train passes and hoots before a crossing. To her surprise, though she knows it lives there, a mouse comes out of a burner from under a pot and sniffs the air. Its feet are like little thorns, its ears are unexpectedly large, one eye is shut and the other open. It nibbles something off the tray of the burner. She moves and it flashes back in, she is still and in a moment it comes out again, and when she moves again it flashes back into the stove like a snapped elastic. At four in the morning though she is still wide awake, reading and sometimes watching the mouse, the woman closes her book and goes back to bed.

In the morning a man sits in the kitchen on a stool, the same stool, by the counter, and cradles their young cat in his arms, holds her neck

in his broad pink hands and rubs the crown of her head with his thumbs, and behind him the woman stands leaning against his back, her breasts flattened against his shoulderblades, her hands closed over his chest, and they have laid out crusts of bread on the counter for the mouse to smell and are waiting for the mouse to come out, blindly, and for the young cat to get it.

They stay this way wrapped in nearly complete silence, and they are nearly motionless, only the man's gentle thumbs move over the cat's skull and the woman sometimes lays her cheek down against the man's fragrant soft hair and then lifts it again and the cat's eyes are shifting quickly from point to point. A motor starts up in the kitchen, then there is the sudden flare of the gas water heater, the swift passage of some cars on the highway below, and then a single voice in the road. But the mouse knows the company that is there, and won't come out. And then the cat is too hungry to keep still and reaches forth one paw after another and frees herself from the man's light hold and climbs up on the counter to eat the bread herself.

Often, whenever she can get into the house or is let into the house, the cat crouches sleepily on the counter by the stove, her eyes pointed at the burner where the mouse is likely to appear, but she is not more vigilant than that, half asleep, as though she likes just to place herself in this situation, hunting the mouse but perfectly motionless. Really she is keeping the mouse company, the mouse vigilant or sleeping inside the stove, the cat nearby outside. The mouse has had babies, in the stove, and the cat, too, is carrying kittens in her body, and her nipples are beginning to stand out in the downy fur of her belly.

The woman often looks at the cat and sometimes remembers another story.

The woman and her husband lived in the country in a large empty house. The rooms in this house were so large that the furniture sank into the empty spaces. There were no rugs and the curtains were thin, the windowpanes cold in the winter, and the daylight and the electric lights at night were cold and white, and lit the bare floor and the bare walls but did not change the darkness of the rooms, so that the rooms

were always full of darkness and empty space and wind.

On two sides of the house, beyond the yard, were stands of trees. One woods was deep and thick and climbed away up over a hill. At the bottom of the hill was a marshy pond in the trees where the water had been caught by the railroad embankment. The tracks and ties were gone from the embankment, and the mound of it was overgrown with saplings. The other stand of trees was thin and bordered a meadow, and deer crossed through to sleep in the meadow. In winter the woman could see their tracks in the snow and follow where they leaped in from the road. When the weather grew cold the mice would start coming into the house from the woods and the meadow, and run through the walls and fight and squeak behind the baseboards. The woman and her husband were not troubled by the mice, except for the little black droppings everywhere, but they had heard that mice would sometimes chew through the wires in the walls and start fires, so they decided to try and get rid of them.

The woman bought some traps at the hardware store, made of bright brassy coils of metal and new raw wood printed with red letters. The man at the hardware store showed her how to set them. It was easy to get hurt because the springs were very strong and tight. The woman had to be the one to set them because she was always the one who did things like that. In the evening before they went to bed, she set one carefully, afraid of snapping her fingers, and put it down in a place where she and he would not be likely to walk on it when they came into the kitchen in the morning forgetting it was there.

They went to bed and the woman stayed awake reading. She would read until the man woke up enough to complain about the light. He was often angry about something and when she read at night it was the light. Later in the night she was still awake and heard the sound like a gunshot of the trap springing but did not go downstairs because the house was cold.

In the morning she went into the kitchen and saw that the trap had flipped over and there was a mouse in it and blood smeared around on the pink linoleum. She thought the mouse was dead, but when

she moved the trap with her foot she saw that it was not. It started flipping around on the linoleum with the trap closed on its head. She did not know what to do. Her husband came in then and neither of them knew what to do about this half dead mouse. They thought that the best thing would be to kill it with a hammer or some other heavy thing but if one of them was going to do it it would be her and she did not have the stomach for it. Bending over the mouse she felt sick and agitated with the fear of something dead or nearly dead or mutilated. Both of them were excited and kept staring at it and turning away from it and walking around the room. The day was cloudy with more snow coming and the light in the kitchen was white and cast no shadows.

Finally the woman decided just to throw it outside, get it out of there, and it would die in the cold. She took a dustpan and pushed it under the trap and the mouse and walked quickly with it out the wooden door to the porch and through the porch and out the storm door and down the steps, afraid all the time that it would jump again and slip off the dustpan. She walked down the pitted concrete walk and across the driveway to the edge of the woods and threw the trap and the mouse out onto the frozen crust of snow. She tried to believe the mouse didn't feel much of the pain and was in shock anyway; certainly a mouse did not feel exactly the way a person would lying with his head closed in a trap bleeding and freezing to death out there on the white crust of snow. She could not be sure.

The mouse certainly died and was probably eaten by another animal. They never looked for the trap later. In midwinter the man left and the women lived on in the house alone. Then she moved to the city and the house was rented to a schoolteacher and his wife and a year later sold to a lawyer from the city. The last time the woman walked through it the rooms were still bare and filled only with darkness and wind, and the furniture set against the bare walls, though it was different furniture, had the same look of defeat under the weight of that emptiness.

△

Todd Baron

a sphere for tristan tzara

Signaling the end of the world
your lips pushed as if to say
Passion
        without words
the halo of
dark light
smashed against your head
Questions
about the earth
How it could be so round
after everyone's standing

Even with the snowless fields to your left
and the silence of
so many breaths taken
the world spins round and round
No-one
        getting sick
of the worm's caress.

The world spins round and round
Passion
        the halo of dark light
after everyone's standing
and the silence of Questions
your lips pushed as if to say

Signaling the end of the world
no-one
getting sick
about the earth
Smashed questions against your head

And the silence of Passion
getting sick
how could it be
dark light
without words
the halo of
the end of the world
signaling
the snowless fields
and so many breaths taken
even with the worm's caress
no one Questions about the earth, Passion
as if to say

No-one questions the halo
how it could be round and round
so many breaths taken after everyone's
standing, signaling the end of
your lips, the worm's caress as if to say
even with the snowless fields to your left
no-one spins round and round the earth.

Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843)

Summer

Rendered from the German by David Rattray

Wherever Summer is a country still,
A quality of heat like molten steel
Glows in the tigerlily's dappled crown
Near where an icy rill meanders down.

In unchecked splendor like a royal train
Great spokes of light wheel over hill and plain;
While, as if Time would temporize with Joy,
At breathless height a sunlit cloud sails by.

Respectfully,

Scardanelli

9 March 1940

△

Photo by Françoise Janicot

Bernard Heidsieck performing at the bottom of a Belgian coalmine.

Bernard Heidsieck

Le Carrefour de la Chaussée d'Antin

AN ATTEMPT AT A SOUND TOPOGRAPHY of a "hot spot" in Paris, of a Square where intersecting and mixing in a contradictory way are banks, insurance companies, the Opera, the Galeries La Fayette, train stations, cafes, movies, prostitutes, cat houses, clothing stores, political demonstrations, for which this Square is a classical path, including as well daily traffic jams.

This text is made up of 12 parts, each corresponding to one of the 6 streets or boulevards forming the Square as well as the 6 buildings that border the thoroughfare. Each section is separated from the following one by a series of mixed extracts from The Association of Consumer Goods.

This text, which begins at the Boulevard Haussmann Metro exit, functions in the sense of the hands of a watch. The following fragment printed here (master-key #16) constitutes the 7th section of the Square: it deals with the "Galeries La Fayette" department store.

(musical and advertising
refrains from Galeries
La Fayette:

on tape
and
without interruption

to the very end of

master-key #16)

premier étage
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée

premier étage
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
deuxième étage
deuxième étage
Lafayette 2
troisième étage
deuxième étage
premier étage
troisième étage
premier étage
Lafayette 3
rez-de-chaussée

quatrième étage
cinquième étage
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
troisième étage
sous-sol
premier étage
premier étage
premier étage
deuxième étage

troisième étage
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
quatrième étage
premier étage

premier étage
rez-de-chaussée
deuxième étage
premier étage

rez-de-chaussée
quatrième étage
sous-sol
quatrième étage
sixième étage

—(L.L.) passe moi ton carrefour
et je te donne le mien!

troisième étage
rez-de-chaussée
troisième étage

deuxième étage
rez-de-chaussée

rez-de-chaussée
quatrième étage
rez-de-chaussée

—(L.L.) un carrefour, c'est un
carrefour!

(haut-parleur des G.L.:)

...et vous avez d'ailleurs des démonstratrices
et démonstrateurs à votre service qui se fe-
ront un plaisir...

(tape of musical
and advertising
refrains from Galeries
La Fayette . . .)

—(S.C.) tu viens chéri...

Lafayette 2
troisième étage

sixième étage
cinquième étage

troisième étage

premier étage
deuxième étage
rez-de-chaussée
premier étage
premier étage
deuxième étage
rez-de-chaussée
deuxième étage
rez-de-chaussée
deuxième étage
deuxième étage
quatrième étage
rez-de-chaussée

premier étage
quatrième étage
troisième étage
rez-de-chaussée
sous-sol
premier étage
quatrième étage
quatrième étage
sixième étage
deuxième étage
rez-de-chaussée

rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
deuxième étage

rez-de-chaussée
sous-sol
Lafayette 3
premier étage

troisième étage
rez-de-chaussée
Lafayette 3
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
Lafayette 3
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
premier étage
deuxième étage
deuxième étage
Lafayette 3
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
sous-sol
sous-sol
deuxième étage

—(S.C.) tu viens chéri...
—(B.G.) centripète ou centrifuge ?
that is the question...
—(R.F.) tu viens chéri...

deuxième étage
troisième étage
Lafayette 2
deuxième étage
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée

(tape of musical
and advertising
refrains from Galeries
La Fayette . . .)

rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
sous-sol
sous-sol
rez-de-chaussée

rez-de-chaussée
quatrième étage
Lafayette 3
Lafayette 3
sixième étage
troisième étage
premier étage
rez-de-chaussée
quatrième étage
deuxième étage
cinquième étage

sixième étage
troisième étage

premier étage
deuxième étage
troisième étage
quatrième étage
quatrième étage
rez-de-chaussée
rez-de-chaussée
sixième étage
rez-de-chaussée

sous-sol
troisième étage
sixième étage
deuxième étage

articles pour chiens
accessoires de bureau
accessoires de coiffure
accessoires de toilette

B

bagages
bas
bijouterie
bonnetterie-baby
bonnetterie-garçons
bonnetterie-hommes
boutique "Mariage"
boutique mini 20 ans
boutique 20 ans
boutique 30 ans

	bottes
	bricolage
	brosserie
sous-sol	C
	cadeaux
	camping
	carrés-écharpes
sous-sol	chapeaux
	chapeaux haute-mode
	chauffage
rez-de-chaussée	chaussures femmes
premier étage	chaussures d'enfants
troisième étage	chaussures d'appartement
	chaussures de plage
sous-sol	chemisiers
Lafayette 3	ceintures
premier étage	colifichets
premier étage	coussins
Lafayette 2	couvertures
	D
quatrième étage	dentelles
	disques
	douillettes
	draps — taies
premier étage	
troisième étage	E
quatrième étage	
	écharpes-carrés
	éclairage
	électro-ménager
Lafayette 2	
quatrième étage	F
	fleurs artificielles
	fournitures d'ameublement

(tape of musical
and advertising
refrains from Galeries
La Fayette . . .)

rez-de-chaussée	fourrures-pelleterie
rez-de-chaussée	fumeurs
	futires mamans
— (R.F.) tu viens chéri...	
— (A.E.) Carrefour: lieu où se croisent plusieurs rues, plusieurs chemins.	
Lafayette 2	G
sous-sol	
	gaines—soutien-gorges
	gants
premier étage	
	H
premier étage	
rez-de-chaussée	horlogerie
	hydrothérapie
quatrième étage	hygiène
rez-de-chaussée	
	I
deuxième étage	
quatrième étage	imperméables hommes
quatrième étage	imperméables femmes
sous-sol	J
premier étage	
Lafayette 2	
premier étage	jardinage
	jouets
premier étage	jupes
premier étage	
Lafayette 2	L
premier étage	laine à tricoter

rez-de-chaussée	layettes et accessoires
rez-de-chaussée	librairie
rez-de-chaussée	linge de toilette
	linge de maison
premier étage	lingerie
rez-de-chaussée	lingerie – bonnetterie
rez-de-chaussée	lingerie jeunes-filles
deuxième étage	lingeries petite filles
deuxième étage	literie
Lafayette 2	lunettes
troisième étage	
deuxième étage	M
premier étage	
troisième étage	machines à coudre
premier étage	maitrise-décoration
Lafayette 3	manteaux
rez-de-chaussée	maroquinerie
	ménage

—(A.E.) Carrefour! Comme on dit BIGRE!

quatrième étage	
cinquième étage	mercerie
rez-de-chaussée	meubles
rez-de-chaussée	meubles d'appoint
troisième étage	meubles de cuisine
sous-sol	meubles d'enfants
premier étage	meubles de jardin
premier étage	mouchoirs
premier étage	montres-pendules
deuxième étage	articles de Paris
troisième étage	maillots de bain
rez-de-chaussée	O
rez-de-chaussée	
quatrième étage	optique
premier étage	orfèvrerie-cadeaux
	outillage-bricollage
premier étage	ouvrages de dames

(tape of musical and advertising refrains from Galeries La Fayette . . .)

rez-de-chaussée	
deuxième étage	P
premier étage	
	pantalons femmes
rez-de-chaussée	papèterie
quatrième étage	papiers-peints
sous-sol	parapluies

(haut-parleur des G.L.:) A tout instant il se passe quelque chose aux Galeries Lafayette

— (L.D.) — Tu viens chéri...

quatrième étage	parfumerie
sixième étage	passementerie

— (L.L.) — Passe moi ton carrefour et je te donne le mien!

troisième étage	patrons
rez-de-chaussée	peignoirs
troisième étage	peinture
	perruques
	philathélie
deuxième étage	photo-cinéma
rez-de-chaussée	plantes vertes

— (B.G.) — Et puis, un deux trois, nous irons au Carrefour!

rez-de-chaussée	plastiques
quatrième étage	porcelaine
rez-de-chaussée	prêt à porter Baby
	prêt à porter filles
Lafayette2	prêt à porter femmes
troisième étage	prêt à porter hommes

	prêts à porter garçons
	prêts à porter juniors
sixième étage	prêt à porter sport
cinquième étage	produits de beauté
troisième étage	produits d'entretien
	pull over
premier étage	
deuxième étage	R
rez-de-chaussée	
premier étage	radio-télévisions
premier étage	reproductions de tableaux/
deuxième étage	encadrements
rez-de-chaussée	revêtements mureaux
deuxième étage	revêtements de sol
deuxième étage	rideaux
quatrième étage	robes
rez-de-chaussée	rubans
premier étage	
quatrième étage	S
troisième étage	sacs — maroquinerie
rez-de-chaussèe	salles de bains
sous-sol	séparables pour jeunes-filles
premier étage	sports et loisirs
	stores
quatrième étage	sports d'hiver
quatrième étage	
sixième étage	T
deuxième étage	
sixième étage	tabliers et robes de maison
rez-de-chaussée	tabliers d'enfants
rez-de-chaussée	tailleurs
deuxième étage	tapis modernes
	tapis d'Orient
	timbres
rez-de-chaussée	tissus
sous-sol	tissus d'ameublement
Lafayette 3	télévisions

(tape of musical
and advertising
refrains from Galeries
La Fayette . . .)

	V
troisième étage	
rez-de-chaussée	verrerie
Lafayette 3	vêtements de cuir
Rez-de-chaussée	voilages
rez-de-chaussée	voitures d'enfants
premier étage	
deuxième étage	LES SERVICES
deuxième étage	
Lafayette 3	A
rez-de-chaussée	
rez-de-chaussée	achats groupés
sous-sol	
sous-sol	B
deuxième étage	bar rapide
deuxième étage	
troisième étage	C
Lafayette 2	cafeteria
deuxième étage	caisse No I
rez-de-chaussée	caméraphot
rez-de-chaussée	carnets d'achats parking
rez-de-chaussée	clefs-service
sous-sol	comptes-particuliers
sous-sol	consigne
rez-de-chaussée	CCF Banque
	D
rez-de-chaussée	décoration-maîtrise
quatrième étage	
Lafayette 3	F
Lafayette 3	famille-information

— (L.L.) — mais surtout, surtout, bien avoir ses carrefours en main...

— (R.F.) — tu viens chéri...

sixième étage	
troisième étage	G
premier étage	garde-fourrures
rez-de-chaussée	garde-tapis
quatrième étage	
deuxième étage	H
cinquième étage	Hertz — location de voitures
sixième étage	Hotels, oeuvres et Institutions
troisième étage	
	I
	Information service
premier étage	interprètes
deuxième étage	
troisième étage	L
quatrième étage	le Pub
quatrième étage	listes de mariages
rez-de-chaussée	
rez-de-chaussée	O
sixième étage	objets trouvés
rez-de-chaussée	
	P
sous-sol	parking accès direct
troisième étage	photomaton
sixième étage	
deuxième étage	R
	restaurant
	réparation de montres
	S
sous-sol	salon de coiffure et de beauté
	salon de thé
	service après vente
sous-sol	
	T
	talon-minute
	taxiphone
rez-de-chaussée	théatres (réservation)
	touring club de France
premier étage	

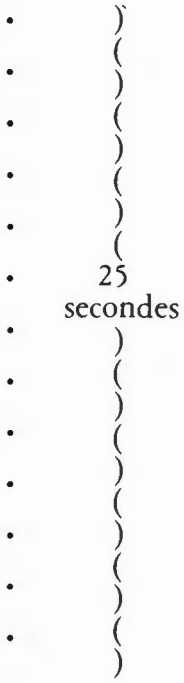
(tape of musical
and advertising
refrains from Galeries
La Fayette . . .)

troisième étage V
sous-sol
Lafayette 3 vente par correspondance
premier étage vestiaire
premier étage voyages (réservation)
Lafayette 2

quatrième étage

premier étage
troisième étage
quatrième étage
Lafayette 2
quatrième étage
rez-de-chaussée

rez-de-chaussée
Lafayette 2
sous-sol
premier étage
premier étage
rez-de-chaussée
deuxième étage
quatrième étage
quatrième étage
sous-sol
premier étage
Lafayette 2
premier étage
premier étage
premier étage
premier étage
premier étage
)
(



△

The entire text takes nearly two hours to perform and involves 30 performers (whose initials occur before their "lines" in the text). Extracts from various performances are to be published as a cassette by The New Wilderness Foundation (NYC) in 1983.

△

3 Poems of the Underworld(s)

1. Black Currant Jelly

Have you opened your head to the dead?
Do they puddle there, wire your voice box?

It comes in as he swallowed,

outside the door to his room the darker successions were waiting,

thumping and purring
thumping and purring .

In the floor the crack opened
and squeezing out gently
on him it fastened.

He opened his mouth.

Hard on this guerdon:
to eat in order to sing.

△

2. A Birth in this World

The scanners went rosy to feel him.
They sped to his eyes and extended their mandibles.

The zealots!

A banquet of sight!
Such stalks!
(such starry wind-walks!)

All use is abuse. The word of the Aeon.

△

3. Outside of McDonald's

The prose of the dying,
who cares for that or this fall?

The riveting beauty

is a ketamine fountain,
the words to be found for,

as the-heads-of-the-gush-up-to-the-aethyrs

snort down through our forms to sustain us,

babble the obdurate poems, flash

our footing such rainbows.

△

John Taggart

Not Raw Enough

1

Brighten the corner where you are

Don't wait
don't wait

until some deed of greatness don't wait to be lit up
shine embrace word and child yes you heard that before
all you hear from me embrace word and child on fire
shine where you are shine shed your light afar
skies you may help to clear don't wait to be clear
to be in the ring ring of bones not one heart alone.

2

in the cross in the cross

Near no good to be kept near try to flag a ride

flag a ride or run you can run you can run
not to precious fountain healing stream to be in in
the cross don't watch and wait fire-lit cross of crystal
run to be in the fire in the light of word and child
you can see beyond the river bones at rest bones at play.

3

day by day his sweet voice soundeth

Daaah dah daaaaah daaaaah
daaah dah daaaaah daaaaah

daaaaah daaaaah daaaaah
daaah dah daaaaah daaah-dah
daaaaah dah dah daaah dah
daaaaaaah-daah-daah-daaaaaah-daah
daaaaaaah-daah-daah-daaaaaah-daah

daaah dah daaaaah daaaaah.

4

there's a song in the air.

While the beautiful sing don't you want to hear words
song of all the words in the air the language song
hear the beautiful bones don't you want to hear all the words
not his sweet voice wonderful words wonderful words of life
every heart is aflame and the beautiful sing
bones sing all the words the words sing through the bones.

Taggart writes:

"[The poems] take off from lines (the underlined, not italicized, ones at the top of each page) from Sunday School hymns I sang in my father's church. The 'nonsense' syllables in no. 3 are arranged, in the first 2 lines, according to how that line was sung, the first one ending on 'his' & the 2nd on the stretched out whole note syllables of 'soundeth.' The rest of the lines make up an accelerated train rhythm.

". . . Most of the language, Ives-fashion, is taken from hymns which I've used for my own purposes; the words & phrases are relocated and made to work against their earlier usage. Ref: Ives' 3rd sonata (piano/violin)."

Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven

Eleven Poems

A Dozen Cocktails—Please

No spinsterlollypop for me— yes— we have
No bananas— I got lusting palate— I
Always eat them — — — — — —
They have dandy celluloid tubes— all sizes—
Tinted diabolically as a baboon's hind-complexion.
A man's a—
Piffle! Will-o'-th'-wisp! What's the dread
Matter with the up-to-date-American-
Home-comforts? Bum insufficient for the
Should-be wellgroomed upsy!
That's the leading question.
There's the vibrator— — —
Coy flappertoy! I am adult citizen with
Vote— I demand my unstinted share
In roofeden— witchsabbath of our baby-
Lonian obelisk.
What's radio for— if you please?
"Eve's dart pricks snookums upon
Wirefence."
An apple a day— — —
It'll come— — — —
Ha! When? I'm no tongueswallowing yogi.
Progress is ravishing—
It doesn't *me*—

Nudge it—
Kick it—
Prod it—
Push it—
Broadcast— — — —
That's the lightning idea!
S.O.S. national shortage of— —
What?
How are we going to put it befitting
Lifted upsys?
Psh! Any sissy poet has sufficient freezing
Chemicals in his Freudian icechest to snuff all
Cockiness. We'll hire one.
Hell! Not that! That's the trouble— —
Cock *crow*— silly!
Oh fine!
They're in France— the air on the line—
The Poles— — — — — —
Have them send waves— like candy—
Valentines— — —
"Say it with— — —
Bolts!
Oh thunder!
Serpentine aircurrents— — —
Hhhhhphsssssss! The very word penetrates
I feel whoozy!
I like that. I don't hanker after
Billyboys— but I am entitled
To be deeply shocked.
So are we— but you fill the hiatus.
Dear— I ain't queer— I need it straight— —
A dozen cocktails— please— — — —

Skin of Faith

"Live and learn"
"Life = 1 damnthing after another."

Life = science
Who knows—
God knows?!—

Betokens:

Each
Rhythmic
Beastly
Breast—

Each
Rooted
Bole—

Each
Petal
Mechanism—

As far as it— — — — — —
But there *must*— — — —

Sh—
Sh—
Sh—
Shshshshshshshshshshshhhhhh!

Easy there!

There's no help:

We are!

Since we
Are—

We must
Be!

So—

Let's!

△

History.
Dim.

Mary-mother—
Travelling
With
Joe—
With
No
Chapero— — — —
Riding
An
Ass— — —

Bother

Sir!
That
Ass
Rode
Her!

No
Matter—
Things
Aren't
Better?
Whichever
Way
They
Travelled
Will
Never
Be
Unravelled.

△

Jigg

Spring jiggs with flute
Tinkling azure lute—
Awhistle!

"Son of sun— thou're late— quite
"Never mind" he flipps—
Teeth white

Through shelllips.

"Mind blood!" snapp I— I'm sick
Hug me— quick!"

"Tooooooorrreeeh!" twangs he—
"Don't fret!
Have violet."

△

Sunsong

Woo
Die
Woo
Die
Ever!

I
Thine
Thou
Mine
Ever!
I
Summer
Winter
Heart!
Love:
Lust
Mixed

Grave
Dead
Pain
Me!
Tomorrow
Kiss
I
Red
Again
Thee!
In
Mine
Lap
Vie:
Truth
Joy
Pest
Lie— — — —
Fixed
Central
Erect
I.

△

Fluency

Death
Is
"A good one"
On

Life

And

Alltogether— — —

△

(Untitled)

Whatever you think about jesus christ
And his
Hobby
Bobby
Remember his dishes
He was hard of fishes
At the hostelry
"Mosher"
He gave
"Hops"
The waiter
12 orders of muttonchops
Later
To raise his crew
The
"Hullaballoo"
Fried kosher:

Liquoring up that bunch— toasting his slobb
Y
Hobby

Bobby –
After the wine
Rain or shine
For the rum shebang
To better go
Hang
Susiegypsy
Stewed them that
Tipsy
As forever to
Prate
Of the
Fate
Of the
Plate
They
Ate!

That son of a bitches
Hobby
Bobby –
Sets me rabiate!

I abbhorr it!
He's nuts
Degenerate
Queer
Horrid!

What's the use
Of blue
Hoodoos
Of jews

To ooze
Every tap
Of the map
Out
Muts
Guts
    Torrid?

To booze
Or
  Not
    To
      Booze
That's the
        Rub!
Shut up!
Lorrit!
Dang!
Git!
Shit
Into the toilet

△

In the Midst—

If breeze will stop mop
Azure roof with each treetop
And alltogether!
Stirring up sight noise by it—
On board ship—

To permit—
To vomit—
Into weather— —
Spit—
Into dragongreen billows guffawing froth—
I—
Ain't loathe to admit:
It maybe worth
Existence to nurse
Along with native sheetiron hearth
In cabin in Kentucky.

Should it quell to lie prone to die— — —
That alone
I guess'll
Spell redress
In mess
Of lifechess
By lush stillness
Of sultry Kentucky.

Say!
With that brazen monotonous element-ayell!
Amoaning—
Afending—
Abending—
Asweeping—
Ahopping—
Apopping—
Amopping—
Apounding—
That trumpetblare stabscreechblue blustering
Firmament— eternal

Rounding— surrounding— infernal
All wee me— — — —
Gee!
Honest
Nay—
(Shit!)
It's hell
That-a-way—
Ain't it
In Sparta, Kentucky?

△

Ultramundanity

earthcrucibles'
sunpestled
spirittestical
lifeworks'
deathproduct:

compoundmetamorphosis'
loamfragrant
essence

attar—
of—
souls:

ashes
to
ashes: transmutation—

ego
to
supremego's:
ultrapool.

from
within
egoistplant's
accumulated
orgasmlitter
heatcolumned
electric
will
spirals
seamen exuberant
sexfestooned
bodyhumped
phallic
lords'
amatriculate
imagecirculate
spiritimmaculate
ultrasensed
egoidolatrous
selfabusive
incestuous
dynamoradiant
homosuicides'

perpetual
perpetrator:
testical
brain
among
egoimagined
images
refleximaginative
imagery.

past
demons'
dim
memorymazed
tongues
invoke
by
grace
of
father
logos
pristine
in
hellmatterself
through
egomechanics'
immortal
systems'
calculated
reciprocity schemes'
infinite
thrift
of

allaround
alltogether
mutual
satisfactory
salvagecult
that:

redeemed
redeem
redeemer.

sol

salto mortale

hip!
pal!
this means *you!*

all's
sugar
in
christendom—

all's
christendom
too!
allalooooooooooooh

△

Enchantment

Here
Crawls
Moon —

Out
Of
This
Hole —
Out
Of
This
Hole

Slips
Moon

Out
Of
This
Cloudhole

Traditional
She
Points
Lightdipped
Toetips
Shrill
Insectchimes

Turn
Me
RIGID

Game
(Legend)

1
Three
People

2
Seated in room

3
Playing
Game—

4
Boy
Scientist
Lady
Bare
Shame—

5
Shameless
In
Love
With
Boy

6
They
Made
Her
Toy

7
Tore
Apart

Swinging
Heart

8
She
Laughed—

As
Pain
Came

9
She
Was not
Young

10
She
Was not
Old—

11
Vibrant
Was
She
Quiverbold

12
Passion mad
She
Leaped
Bed
Of
Love
Dead—

13
At
Dawn
Heart
Shone
Gold

△

Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Born in Germany in 1874, murdered by a boyfriend in Paris in 1927. Dadaist, poet, junk-sculptor, streetwalker, proto-shopping bag lady, *Little Review* regular, courtesan in Italy, poorhouse inmate in Germany, local eccentric in Paris and Greenwich Village. "She dressed in purple and yellow clothes with a coal scuttle on her head or a tam-o'-shanter complete with feathers and ice cream spoons, or black vest and kilts, with brass teaballs suspended from her nipples. Once she'd even shaved her head and painted her face two colors divided down the center so that seen from either profile she offered two distinct faces." (Paul Mariani) Her husband, the Baron, took her to Kentucky and then shot himself; Man Ray and Berenice Abbott photographed her; Williams once bailed her out of the Women's House of Detention and once knocked her down and had her arrested (she was determined to give him the "gift" of syphilis); Stevens wouldn't go near the Village for fear of her; Djuna Barnes was her only steadfast friend. Her long poem "Mineself—Minesoul—And—Mine—Cast-Iron Lover" (reprinted in Rothenberg's *Revolution of the Word*) touched off a debate in *The Little Review* on madness and art that dragged on for years. (Jane Heap: "Elsa von Freytag works unhampered by sanity.")

At her death she left some 600 pages of unpublished material, including a 200-page autobiography. These were entrusted to Djuna Barnes who, for almost sixty years, refused to allow any of it to be published. Samisdat xeroxes have been circulating for some time: with Barnes' death at 90 this year, the Baroness' work will finally see print.

—*E.W.*

△

Jerome Rothenberg

Pre-Face to Symposium of the Whole

WHEN THE INDUSTRIAL WEST began to discover—& plunder—"new" & "old" worlds beyond its boundaries, an extraordinary countermovement came into being in the West itself. Alongside the official ideologies that shoved European man to the apex of the human pyramid, there were some thinkers & artists who found ways of doing & knowing among the other peoples as complex as any in Europe & often virtually erased from European consciousness. Cultures described as "primitive" & "savage"—a stage below "barbarism"—were simultaneously the models for political & social experiments, religious & visionary revivals, & forms of art & poetry so different from European norms as to seem revolutionary from a later Western perspective. It was almost, looking back at it, as if every "radical" innovation in the West was revealing a counterpart—or series of counterparts—somewhere in the traditional worlds the West was savaging.

From the side of a poetics, there has been a discourse (really a range of such discourses) that has been a vital aspect of 20th Century poetry

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Excerpted from *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward Ethnopoetics*, ed. Jerome Rothenberg and Diane Rothenberg, University of California Press, scheduled 1983.

& art—with precedents going back two centuries & more. The poetics in question, which I have spoken of elsewhere as an "*ethno*poetics," reemerged after World War II (with its rampant & murderous racism) & the dislocations of the European colonial system during the post-war period.* Whenever it has appeared—& some version of it may be as old as human consciousness itself—it has taken the form of what Stanley Diamond, in a recently renewed "critique of civilization," calls "the search for the primitive" or, more precisely, the "attempt to define a primary human potential." The search as such is by no means confined to the "modern" world (though our concern with it has been just there) but felt as well, say, in the words of ancient Heracleitus often cited by Charles Olson: "Man is estranged from that with which he is most familiar." And it is present too in the thought of those the West had cast as ultimate "primitives," as when the Delaware Indians tell us in their *Walum Olum*:

> in the beginning of the world
> all men had knowledge cheerfully
> all had leisure
> all thoughts were pleasant
>
> at that time all creatures were friends....

The "past" is what it is—or was—but it is also something we discover & create through a desire to know what it is to be human, anywhere.

Some of the results of that search & its attendant yearnings are obvious by now—so much so that a principal defense against their power to transform us involves an attack on a "primitivism" debased

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*The word "ethnopoetics" suggested itself, almost too easily, on the basis of earlier terms like ethnohistory, ethnomusicology, ethnolinguistics, ethnopharmacology, & so on. As such it refers to a redefinition of poetry in terms of cultural specifics, with an emphasis on those alternative traditions to which the West gave names like "pagan," "gentile," "tribal," "oral," & "ethnic." In its developed form, it moves toward an exploration of creativity over the fullest human range, pursued with a regard for particularized practice as much as unified theory & further "defined" in the actual discourse.

by the attackers & abstracted thereby from its revolutionary potential. Such a "primitivism" is not in any case the stance we would choose to encourage. Nor is our interest directed backward toward a past viewed with feelings of decontextualized nostalgia. It is our contention, in fact, that the most experimental & future-directed side of Romantic & modern poetry, both in the Western world & increasingly outside it, has been the most significantly connected with the attempt to define an ethnopoetics.

There is a politics in all of this, & an importance, clearly, beyond the work of poets & artists. The old "primitive" models in particular—of small & integrated, stateless & classless societies—reflect a concern over the last two centuries with new communalistic & anti-authoritarian forms of social life & with alternatives to the environmental disasters accompanying an increasingly abstract relation to what was once a living universe. Our belief in this regard is that a reviewing of "primitive" ideas of the "sacred" represents an attempt —by poets & others—to preserve & enhance primary human values against a mindless mechanization that has run past any uses it may once have had. (This, rather than the advocacy of some particular system, seems to us the contribution of the "primitive" to whatever world we may yet hope to bring about.) As a matter of history, we would place the model in question both in the surviving, still rapidly vanishing stateless cultures & in a long subterranean tradition of resistance to the twin authorities of state & organized religion.

What we're involved with here is a complex redefinition of cultural & intellectual values: a new reading of the poetic past & present that Robert Duncan speaks of as "a symposium of the whole." In such a new "totality," he writes, "all the old excluded orders must be included. The female, the proletariat, the foreign; the animal and vegetative; the unconscious and the unknown; the criminal and failure—all that has been outcast and vagabond must return to be admitted in the creation of what we consider we are." If that or some variant thereof is taken as the "larger" picture, it can provide the

context in which to see most clearly the searches & discoveries in what we call "the arts." In painting & sculpture, say, the results of those searches are by now so well-known that there's little surprise left in marking the change from Ruskin's late 19th century comment, "There is no art in the whole of Africa, Asia, and America," to Picasso's exclamation on his first sighting of an African sculpture, "It is more beautiful than the Venus de Milo." Yet the obviousness of the change is itself deceptive. The "human" concerns demanded by the Dada poet Tristan Tzara—for art that "lives first of all for the functions of dance, religion, music, and work"—remain largely submerged in the "aesthetic"; & it's a long way too from Picasso's classicizing admiration of the static art object to the reality of a tribal/oral "art in motion" that brings all our scattered arts together.

This dream of a total art—& of a life made whole—has meant different things & been given different names throughout this century. "Intermedia" was a word for it in its 1960s manifestation—but also "total theater" & "happenings," etc.—behind which was the sense of what the 19th century Wagnerian consciousness had called *gesamtkuenstwerk* & had placed—prefigured—at the imagined beginnings of the human enterprise. The difference in our own time was to smash that imperial & swollen mold—to shift the primary scene from Greece, say, to the barbaric or paleolithic past, or to the larger, often still existing tribal world, & to see in that world (however "outcast & vagabond" it had been made to look) a complexity of act & vision practiced by proto-poets/proto-artists who were true "technicians of the sacred." And along with this shift came the invention & revival of *specific* means: new materials & instruments (plastic & neon, film & tape) alongside old or foreign ones (stones, bones & skin; drums, didjeridoos & gamelans); ancient roles & modes of thought that had survived at the Western margins (sacred clowns & dancers, shamanistic ecstasies, old & new worlds of dream & chance); & a tilt towards ritual, not as "an obsessional concern with repetitive acts" but, as Victor Turner describes it, "an immense orchestration of genres in all avail-

able sensory codes: speech, music, singing; the presentation of elaborately worked objects, such as masks; wall-paintings, body-paint ings; sculptured forms; complex, many-tiered shrines; costumes; dance forms with complex grammars and vocabularies of bodily move ments, gestures, and facial expressions."

The description, which fits both "them" & "us," holds equally true in the language arts, though by the nature of language itself (& the need to translate ourselves in—always—partial forms) the complexity & the interplay of new & old haven't been as clear there. Taken as a whole, then, the human species presents an extraordinary richness of verbal means—both of languages & poetries—closed to us until now by an unwillingness to think beyond the conventions & boundaries of Western literature. This "literature" as such goes back in its root meaning to an idea of writing—more narrowly & literally, the idea of alphabetic writing (*littera*, Lat. = "letters") as developed in the West. In poetry, the result has been to exclude or set apart those oral traditions which together account for the greatest human diversity, an exclusion often covered over by a glorification of the oral past. Thus Marshall McLuhan—defining the words "tribal" & "civilized" on the basis of alphabetic literacy alone—can write: "Tribal cultures like those of the Indian and Chinese [!] may be greatly superior to the Western cultures in the range and delicacy of their expressions & perception," & in the same paragraph: "Tribal cultures cannot entertain the possibility of the individual or of the separate citizen." (But contrast this, e.g., to Paul Radin's more studied account of tribal cultures characterized by "an individualism run riot" & a "ruthless realism.")

If the recovery of the "oral" is crucial to the present work, it goes hand in hand with a simultaneous expansion of the idea of writing & the text, wherever & whenever found. To summarize rapidly, the oral recovery involves a poetics deeply rooted in the powers of song & speech, breath & body, as brought forward across time by the living presence of poet-performers, with or without the existence of a visible/literal text. The range of such poetries is the range of human cul-

ture itself, & the forms they take (different for each culture) run from wordless songs & mantras to the intricacies (imagistic & symbolic) of multi-levelled oral narratives; from the stand-up performances of individual shamans & bards to the choreographies of massed dancers & singers, extended sometimes over protracted periods of time. From the side of visual & written language—which may, like the oral, be as old as the species itself—a fully human poetics would include all forms of what Jacques Derrida calls *arch-écriture* (= primal writing): pictographs & hieroglyphs, aboriginal forms of visual & concrete poetry, sand paintings & earth mappings, gestural & sign languages, counting systems & numerologies, divinational signs made by man or read (as a poetics of natural forms) in the tracks of animals or of stars through the night sky.

That practices like these correspond to experimental moves in our own time isn't needed to "justify" them, but it indicates why we're now able to see them & to begin to understand as well the ways they differ from our own work. Other areas in which such correspondences hold true may be more involved with "idea" than "structure," though the distinction isn't always easy to maintain. Traditional divination work, for example—the Ifa oracles of Africa, say, or the Chinese *I Ching*—rests on the recognition of a world revealed moment by moment through processes of chance & synchronicity (= the interrelatedness of simultaneous events), and these processes in turn inform one major segment of our avant-garde. Similarly, the widespread practice of exploring the "unknown" through the creation of new languages shows a strong sense of the "virtual" nature of reality (what Senghor speaks of in its African phase as the traditional "surreal") & the linguistic means to get it said. The idea of the "surreal"—at its most meaningful—also suggests the dream-works so central to other cultures & so long submerged in ours. And from these, or through them, it's only a short step into a life lived in a state-of-myth ("reality at white heat," Radin called it) & to the recovery of archetypes (as image &/or symbol) that infuse our own work at its most heated: the

animal & trickster side of us; the goddess & the feminine; the sense of "earth as a religious form" & of a living, even "human" universe; the commitment to imaginal geographies & journeys that lead into our own lives & minds. These are as old as the human, maybe older, & they come back to us, transformed, not so much when we shut out the immediate world around us as when we choose to work within it.

The 20th century—& with it the attendant modernisms that have characterized our poetry & art—is by now winding down. It has been a long haul & a sometimes real adventure, but the work is in no way complete & some of the major points have still to be hammered home. My own choice has been to write from the side of a modernism that sees itself as challenging limits & changing ways of speaking/thinking/doing that have too long robbed us of the freedom to be human to the full extent of our powers & yearnings. The struggle is immediate & the objects & attitudes to be destroyed or transformed appear on every side of us. But it isn't a question of our having no sense of history or of the human past—no sense of possibilities besides the most apparent. The clincher in fact is the transformation, beyond that, of our consciousness of the human in all times & places.

△

BOOK REVIEWS

The Country Between Us. CAROLYN FORCHÉ.
Harper & Row. 1981.

by ELIOT WEINBERGER

I.

In El Salvador, in peaceful times, a favored pastime of the rich was football played on horseback. In the place of a ball, they used a live duck.

Five million people once lived there. Today, half a million have fled abroad. The rest are being decimated at the rate of 10,000 political deaths a year.

The left tends to murder soldiers and individuals: high-placed officials and low-placed "informers." The right prefers the murder of guerillas, reformers, liberals, and whole villages of peasants, the "sympathizers."

The people are the hungriest in the hemisphere. It is estimated that a family needs 17 acres to support itself; 96.3% of the rural population has 12 acres or less. It is estimated that a family needs $533 a year for minimal survival; 60% make less. 2% of the population controls 60% of the land.

The last honest elections were held in 1931. After nine months, the government was overthrown by one General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. In 1932, on a night when volcanoes were erupting throughout Central America, there was a peasant revolt against the General. It failed, and Martínez responded by killing some 25,000 people: *la matanza*, the massacre. He ruled for a dozen more years, holding seances in the palace.

The General would lecture the people over the radio: "Biologists have only discovered five senses. But in reality there are ten. Hunger, thirst, procreation, urination and bowel movements are the senses not included in the lists of the biologists." Or "It is a greater crime to kill an ant than a man, for a man who dies is reincarnated while an ant dies forever." "In El Salvador," he declared, "I am God." During an epidemic, he forbade medical measures and refused the help of health organizations. Streetlamps were wrapped in

colored cellophane: It was the General's belief that colored light would purify the air, ending the pestilence.

In 1969, the Honduran Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that the Colgate toothpaste manufactured in El Salvador was causing cavities in the teeth of Honduran children. The next day, El Salvador's Under-Secretary for Economic Integration charged that Glostora, a hair cream made in Honduras, was giving Salvadoreans dandruff. Soon after, El Salvador defeated Honduras in the semi-finals for the World Cup. War broke out, killing 2000 soldiers and an unknown number of civilians.

The nominal government of El Salvador is a shifting cast of military juntas and ephemeral coalition juntas, supported by (in the last three years) a billion dollars in U.S. or U.S.-sponsored multilateral aid. Power is held by the Army, the National Guard, the National Police, the Treasury Police, and various paramilitary organizations and death squads.

On the left there are at least 50 opposition groups. Among them, the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation is not the Farabundo Martí Popular Forces of Liberation; and the Democratic Nationalist Union is not the National Opposition Union, which is not the National Democratic Union, which is not the Popular Democratic Union.

The leaders, left and right, are interchanging and interchangeable. Most are from the elite. They are related, school chums, intermarried. Alliances are in a state of restless change: within the left, within the right, from left to right, right to left. Of the two Salvadoreans best known in the U.S., José Napoleón Duarte, the winner-then-loser of the last fraudulent elections, is currently a center-rightist promoted by Reagan, having served as a Communist Party candidate for President, a reformist mayor, and a participant in a military coup. And Roque Dalton, the guerilla poet (who once, like the hero of the von Kleist story, escaped execution when his prison walls crumbled in an earthquake) was killed by his own organization on the grounds that he was a CIA agent. Today his assassin is sponsored by the Roque Dalton Cultural Brigade.

Beneath the swirling rainbow slick of factions and counterfactions, there is the groundswell: the popular movements, organizations of farmers, factory workers, shantytown dwellers. Sharing a common enemy (the army, the oligarchy) with the leftists, the popular organizations enter into desultory alliances with this and that leftist group, but are represented by none. The

left, as so often, is debilitated by Marxist exegesis and its taxonomies of mutual dismissal—adventurism, deviationism, militarism, insurrectionism, revisionism, opportunism—while the right grows stronger.

For the outsider—the *reader*—El Salvador is a story that cannot be followed. There is no simple incarnation of evil (a Somoza, Batista) nor group capable of restoring the nation. It is a war without sides—that is, with scores of sides—without ideology and with no solutions other than the mere ascension to power. There is only the continuing suffering of the people, and the isolated individuals and local groups attempting to alleviate that suffering.

It is the triumph of the demonic. In its torture chambers and in its rococo inventions of mutilation, the powers of El Salvador have perfected an anti-art—the imagination as giver of death—and an anti-poetry, where every word is its antonym: In the mornings, nude and headless torsos are found with this note pinned to their flesh: ¡*Viva la Matanza*! Long Live the Massacre!

II.

Carolyn Forché is generally perceived as a "political poet" whose book, *The Country Between Us*, was written "out of" the catastrophe in El Salvador. The popularity of the book has placed her among the few social poets with a large readership: Levertov, Ginsberg, Snyder, Rich. Levertov herself has declared that Forché is "a poet who's doing what I want to do," and Jacobo Timerman, of all people, has laid this iron wreath on the poet's head: "Latin America needs a poet to replace the man who represented in his writings the beauty, sufferings, fears and dreams of this continent: Pablo Neruda. Carolyn Forché is that voice."

A reader is always attracted to, or put off by, an unknown writer for the slightest of gestures, and I had resisted reading the book, until asked to review it, for two small misgivings. First there is the book's cover: a photograph of what might be Hugh Hefner's latest girlfriend. It is, of course, the author herself, in a misty Extreme Close Up, with head tilted up, eyes looking dreamily toward the light, full lips slightly parted. Why would Forché, a leftist and feminist, allow herself (possibly choose) to be marketed in this manner?

My second suspicion rose from a single word in an article Forché had

written for *The Nation* with Leonel Gomez. The subject was the Salvadorean army, and this was the second sentence: "In 1932, when the people of El Salvador first rose in rebellion, the army slaughtered what we have painstakingly calculated to be between 20,000 and 25,000 people." It was the word "painstakingly," and it bothered me beyond its evident lack of humility. Though the usage is literally correct ("pains" is not "pain") I wondered how any writer could type the letters *pain* in such a sentence, referring not to the massacre of thousands, but to her own tedious though no doubt depressing statistical work. By her publisher and by herself, it seemed that El Salvador was being reduced to Forché.

Strange, then, to find how little of the book is actually concerned with El Salvador, that so much has been made of so little. There are 22 poems here: 14 on other matters and only 8 in the section titled "In Salvador 1978-80." Of those eight, a small two were written and located in the country itself (a visit to a prisoner and to an army colonel). Three of the others occur in California or Mallorca, where the poet thinks or talks to people about El Salvador. Two have no specific location, but were written outside the country (a Nerudesque cry of compassion for guerilla friends and an elegy for a slain reformer); and one occurs probably in Spain and concerns a woman whose husband was murdered in Argentina. Forché's El Salvador is more a state of mind than state, a country the author is "in" wherever she is, and—if the book's title is to be understood at all—the barrier of suffering between the poet and her friends, lovers, readers.

The 14 other poems are written to a formula. Most are addressed in the first person to a friend, lover, or the poet herself; or they are in the voice of a friend/lover speaking to her. They are elegiac, nostalgic, melancholy, filled with references to distant, violent events. Of the 14 poems, 13 mention clothes; 11 refer to food; 11 to beverages, especially alcoholic beverages; 11 to sex; 10 include a place name, usually foreign; 9 have the word "dead" or "death"; 8 refer to smoking.

At her worst, Forché is student-profound ("We have, each of us, nothing. / We will give it to each other.") corny ("we whispered *yes*, there on the intricate / balconies of breath, overlooking / the rest of our lives.") annoying (a poem that ends: "If you read this poem, write to me. / I have been to Paris since we parted.") or poetic and vague:

We spend our morning
in the flower stalls counting
the dark tongues of bells
that hang from ropes waiting
for the silence of an hour.
We find a table, ask for *paella*,
cold soup and wine, where a calm
light trembles years behind us.

(This last is creative writing school stuff, and one imagines the exasperated voice of the prof: did you really spend a morning counting clappers?; bells "wait" for silence *to pass*; where is "where"? what does the last line mean anyway?)

Usually, Forché sounds something like this (from a poem describing her room):

The bundle of army letters
were sent from Southeast Asia
during '67, kept near a bottle
of vodka drained by a woman
in that same year who wanted
only to sleep; the fatigues
were his, it is she
whom I now least resemble.

. . .

Under the bed, a pouch of money:
pesetas, dinar, francs, the coins
of no value in any other place.
In the notebooks you will find
those places: the damp inner thighs,
the delicate rash left by kisses,
fingers on the tongue, a swallow
of brandy, a fire.
It is all there, the lies
told to myself because of Paris,
the stories I believed in Salvador
and Granada, and every so often
simply the words calling back
a basket of lemons and eggs,
a bowl of olives.

"Paris" and "Granada" are unexplained elsewhere; the Mediterranean is the

usual lemons and olives; the sex is strictly *Playboy*, complete with brandy and fire, though the conjunction, in one line, of "fingers on the tongue" and "swallow" is more vomitive than provocative. The two non-descriptive phrases state the following: "the clothes are his but I am different" and "it's impossible to exchange foreign coins." Otherwise, all the bases are swiftly touched in an air of world-weariness: the victim who suffers because of distant events in which she has no part.

The best, and best-known, poem in the book is actually a bit of prose, written in El Salvador:

The Colonel

> What you have heard is true. I was in his house. His wife carried a tray of coffee and sugar. His daughter filed her nails, his son went out for the night. There were daily papers, pet dogs, a pistol on the cushion beside him. The moon swung bare on its black cord over the house. On the television was a cop show. It was in English. Broken bottles were embedded in the walls around the house to scoop the kneecaps from a man's legs or cut his hands to lace. On the windows there were gratings like those in liquor stores. We had dinner, rack of lamb, good wine, a gold bell was on the table for calling the maid. The maid brought green mangoes, salt, a type of bread. I was asked how I enjoyed the country. There was a brief commercial in Spanish. His wife took everything away. There was some talk then of how difficult it had become to govern. The parrot said hello on the terrace. The colonel told it to shut up, and pushed himself from the table. My friend said to me with his eyes: say nothing. The colonel returned with a sack used to bring groceries home. He spilled many human ears on the table. They were like dried peach halves. There is no other way to say this. He took one of them in his hands, shook it in our faces, dropped it into a water glass. It came alive there. I am tired of fooling around he said. As for the rights of anyone, tell your people they can go fuck themselves. He swept the ears to the floor with his arm and held the last of his wine in the air. Something for your poetry, no? he said. Some of the ears on the floor caught this scrap of his voice. Some of the ears on the floor were pressed to the ground.

What makes it a prose "poem," I suppose, are the last two lines. They nearly wreck it. After such a powerful real-surreal incident, why does Forché find it necessary to end with a flourish of surrealism from the Iowa Writing School? The first of the two is a "so what" line: some (not all?) of the ears have heard the colonel's final statement. (They didn't, but what if they had?). The

second, unfortunately, has two readings: not only "listening"—presumably to the sound of distant hordes approaching—but also "squashed underfoot."

I don't see Forché as a political poet at all, for the poems neither illuminate a political situation, are an exhortation to arms, nor artifacts themselves of a political reality. They belong, rather, to the genre of revolutionary tourism. In the poems Forché meets, talks to, sleeps with, thinks of individuals involved in political circumstances (as actors or victims) while remaining an outsider herself, *toujours la gringa.* In a poem addressed to guerilla friends, she writes:

> You will fight
> and fighting, you will die. I will live
> and living cry out until my voice is gone
> to its hollow of earth, where with our
> hands and by the lives we have chosen
> we will dig deeper into our deaths.
> I have done all that I could do.
> Link hands, link arms with me . . .

By blurring the line between participation and observation, we are meant to believe that the suffering of El Salvador is Forché's own suffering. It is a common confusion among tourists to the Third World, the form of "going native" taken by those with pretensions to saintliness. But—need I say it?—being back in L.A. unable to sleep and angry at the sight of Salvadorean produce in the Safeway (as she tells us in another poem) is not the same as being confined to a one meter by one meter by one meter cell, lying curled in your own shit and menstrual blood.

To presume to "link arms," declaring oneself equal, with those who have endured such torment; to speak to people who will be corpses in the morning and claim that you too are digging deep into your own death (if that means anything at all) and that you have done all that you could do—it is more than naiveté and audacity. It is the liberal side of colonialism. The ears on the dinner table are, in the end, just "something" for her poetry, a horror to be presented only after the reader has examined the author's portrait. △

One Night Stand & Other Poems. JACK SPICER.
Edited by DONALD ALLEN. Grey Fox. 1980.

by LORI CHAMBERLAIN

In a letter to Robin Blaser published in *Admonitions*, Jack Spicer writes:

> So don't send the box of old poetry to Don Allen. Burn it or rather open it with Don and cry over the possible books that were buried in it—the *Songs Against Apollo*, the *Gallery of Gorgeous Gods*, the *Drinking Songs*—all incomplete, all abortive—

Don Allen has, fortunately, ignored Spicer's admonition against the early poetry by publishing the "uncollected" early work, *One Night Stand & Other Poems*. Although slightly over half of the poems have been published elsewhere (*Caterpillar* #12, *Manroot* #10, the Fall 1977 issue of *Boundary 2*), this book puts the poems together in a roughly chronological sequence and makes the work available to a wide audience. Coupled with *The Collected Books*, *One Night Stand* fleshes out Spicer's ghostly reputation. It is given a useful and interesting introduction by Robert Duncan, who locates the theater of "influences" within which Spicer wrote—including John Livingston Lowes' *Road to Xanadu*, Crane's *The Bridge*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Maltese Falcon*, T.S. Eliot, Yeats, Pound, Calvin, and Spicer's own peers.

One Night Stand is, by definition, not one of Spicer's "books," and indeed, that is why he rejected that "box of old poetry." For, somewhere around the time he was working on *After Lorca*, he discovered the "serial" poem and rejected the single poem as such:

> Poems should echo and reecho against each other. They should create resonances. They cannot live alone any more than we can.
>
> (*Admonitions*)

One Night Stand, on the other hand, is filled with single poems, or "one night stands"; they are, he says in the same letter to Blaser, "pointing nowhere, as meaningless as sex in a Turkish bath." Spicer's rejection of the early work should, however, be viewed with a measure of scepticism; this book is not mere juvenilia. In fact, according to Blaser (see his afterword to *The Collected Books*) Spicer "often gave his birthdate as 1945 or 1946"—the

starting point as well for these "one night stands." These poems, fragments of possible books ("the *Songs Against Apollo*, the *Gallery of Gorgeous Gods*, the *Drinking Songs*"), provide clues to the development of Spicer's poetics. We see, for example, Spicer's early interest in Orpheus ("Orpheus After Eurydice," "Orpheus in Hell," "Orpheus' Song to Apollo") which Duncan touches upon in the preface. We see also his preoccupations—with sexuality, mortality, language, God; his characteristic topoi—birds, ghosts, angels; his sensibility—a macabre humor, a fascination with baseball and "American" culture. Most important, we see his early struggle with the "outside" which was to dominate his later work.

Thus, while Spicer claims to have become *conscious* of the role of dictation in his poetry much later—to have recognized that poetry for him originated outside the poet and that the poet was more or less like the radio set in Cocteau's *Orphée*, a receiver of messages—the poems in *One Night Stand* act as the *subconscious* acknowledgement of that poetics. "It is as if we conjure the dead and they speak only / Through our own damned trumpets, through our damned medium," he says in "Imaginary Elegies." Here is a description of the condition of dictation, yet it is not until the 1965 Vancouver lectures (see *Caterpillar* 12) that Spicer credits Yeats with re-discovering the "outside" so essential to his own poetry. Spicer's jesting epigraph to "Imaginary Elegies"—"All the philosophy a man needs is in Berkeley—is taken from Yeats' *A Vision* (where Yeats discusses dictation), indicating that Spicer is familiar at least as early as 1950-1955 with the possibilities of dictation.

In order to conjure the dead, however, the poet himself must be *as if* dead. Read "A Heron for Mrs. Altrocchi" as an early recognition of this problem. Here Spicer identifies himself with the flightless heron:

> Blue-rooted heron standing in the lake
> Standing in unguessed song; like me no traveler.
> Taking unsinging rest, loose-winged water-bird,
> And dumb with music like the lake is dumb.

Feeling trapped in his own body ("We find the body difficult to speak") and in his own consciousness, Spicer sees in the metaphoric condition of death the possibility of true poetry:

> Then let us die, for death alone is motion,

And death alone can make these herons fly.
Though stiff and wingless, we will cross an ocean
On throats too huge for silence when he die.

The metaphoric condition of death occurs when the poet can clear away the purely subjective, what he calls in *After Lorca* the "big lie of the personal," and it is this condition that allows him to correspond with other dead poets (Lorca, Rimbaud) through the dead letter office of poetry. What we see in *One Night Stand* is the desire to get out of oneself, which links both sexuality and mortality in the struggle with language.

Thematically and poetically the struggle with the outside coalesces in the several poems concerning Jacob and the angel. As a topos in Spicer's poetry, this Biblical story represents an archetypal homosexual one night stand. In "A Poem to the Reader of the Poem," Jack/Jacob struggles with an angel/lover who, *mutatis mutandis*, becomes a Baudelairean "hypocrite reader." At the same time, the poem struggles with its own language, continually questioning itself, its motives, its meanings:

I throw a naked eagle in your throat.
I dreamed last night
That I was wrestling with you on the mountainside.
An eagle had a dream over our heads.
We threw rocks at him.
I dreamed last night—
This is false in any poem
Last night never happened
Couldn't
Make you feel the meaning so quickly

Spicer does not merely describe the struggle; he presents it in a battle of words. He throws a "naked eagle," he dreams that he was wrestling, he throws rocks at the eagle, and then he rejects the dream in poetry, he rejects last night, and he disavows any ability to "make you feel the meaning so quickly." Yet somehow in the struggle to make sense, he does make us feel the meaning. Perhaps this is what dreams are for.

This wrestling is caused by the gap between the writer as ego and the words he uses, the poet and the outside. Spicer locates the origin of this gap in the parable of Babel:

God didn't

Divide us into different languages
He divided
Words and men.
Men and words—He called the words angels.

("Babel 3")

To pretend that this gap can be bridged is idealism, false to Spicer's sense of the world. Thus, rather than attempt to heal the gap, Spicer engages in the battle with a language so energized, so confrontational, that the ghosts of poetry are brought to life. Spicer's need to so wrestle with the angel of language dominates his later poetics of dictation and translation, but in *One Night Stand* he prepares the battleground. Like all one night stands, some poems run the risk of casuality or glibness, but taken as a whole, they provide us with an essential foundation for the later work. △

Nigredo: Selected Poems 1970-1980. NORMAN WEINSTEIN. Station Hill Press. 1982.

by DIANE WAKOSKI

It is fashionable in this time of new poetry and old criticism to use words like "original" to describe the work of poets so hackneyed in the lyric tradition that using the word is farcical, or to reserve it for old (often dead) poets whom no one has liked but grudgingly are given some laurels. Probably this reality is what has given rise to Robert Duncan, surely one of our most gifted living poets, to publicly stating that all of his poetry is derivative, or for poets like Frank O'Hara in his essay, "Personism: A Manifesto," to claim that they are destroying or abolishing poetry.

What, of course, we all want is a new voice with old resonances, but the only means we have found for recognizing that new voice is studying very old ones, a process that rips off most students along the way, as they settle down to love Catullus, or Milton, or Dante, Yeats or Dickinson, and never emerge into a world beyond those figures and their beautiful old voices. I,

myself, am constantly impressed with the impossibility of a young student having anything like an original voice. Original would probably mean I don't understand him or her, or they sound like someone currently out of fashion, like Dylan Thomas or Tennyson. Ever since Ed Dorn, a poet who, 15 years ago, seemed to me to be a pale imitation of Robert Creeley, despite his avowed discipleship to Olson, came out of his cocoon of short pseudo-Creeley lyrics and wrote one of the most original long narrative poems of our time, *Gunslinger*, I have had to forget my precepts for originality with regard to young poets, and try to look at their work differently. This is not easy for me, as I have been a maverick all my life, and wanted nothing except distinction, both in myself and anything I touched. Still, Duncan's claim has had me thinking for the past 10 years, and *Gunslinger* is a constant reminder of the limitations of judging too soon.

All this preamble is to say how impressed I have been with Norman Weinstein's book of poems, particularly in light of my sense of his work 10 years ago, my thinking that it was a pale imitation of my own, Robert Kelly's, perhaps Creeley's poetry. Probably many others. He could fill you in, for surely we all do learn our craft, if not our art, from other poets. And I do still see one stamp left on the poems of *Nigredo*, particularly "The Dead Child," "The Secret Life of Sidney Bechet," or "The History of Voodoo." It is the stamp of Clayton Eshleman and his deeply unique spiraled, convoluted mesh of language modes from the slangy to the lyric. In this sense, Weinstein is derivative, as Duncan claims to be, for Duncan's statement is almost an arrogant announcement that his voice is so special that no one could mistake it, yet he himself *knows* all the sources from which it comes.

In the poems in this collection, Weinstein is writing a wonderfully special Weinsteinian poetry. It is his. But the channel through which some of it must have flowed is Eshleman. That peculiar combination of self-searching through therapy, through memory, through philosophy and literature, and finally through love is Eshleman's, but Weinstein has made a personal version of it.

In "Meshes:3", he says:

> somewhere in a gray Philadelphia
> afternoon as you
> skim this page

a neon sign with the word: W E I N S T E I N
flickers
off/on in roughly
pulse rhythm

(p. 12)

The poem continues, describing the hardware store sign with a neon hammer pounding a nail and concludes,

tribal history

fate

first

illumination

(p. 12)

This is the theme of Weinstein's poems and his self searching, through a difficult family which yielded very confusing images of both father and mother, male and female. Weinstein meanders through his memories of painful encounters, relieving them occasionally with fantastic surreal images, as in the Spanish Fandango poems which, in rich Eshleman style, is no reference to Castillian matters, but rather to an old recording heard on a jukebox by Bob Wills & The Texas Playboys of a rockabilly song called "Spanish Fandango."

I see in Weinstein's poems a quality beyond originality: I see him using the materials of his culture, his time, his personal history, and a need to relate this to the outer world of the 20th century. Perhaps what he is doing in writing the poems in *Nigredo* is what all good American poets are doing right now. But he is doing it in the voice of Norman Weinstein, giving us the peculiar and intriguingly personal world of his origins and personality. His poems are like the neon hammer driving in the neon nail, flickering, pushing the nail down, raising itself again in lights, over and over, and I get the message, "Weinstein, Weinstein, Weinstein," in such a way that I want to go there; I trust his merchandise; I like his store; I will buy what he is selling and believe it is of the best quality.

This first collection of Norman Weinstein's poems is substantial, inter-

esting, one that represents the best of the new poetry being written today in this country. △

Spiritual Exercises. ROBERT KELLY.
Black Sparrow. 1981.

by JED RASULA

Kelly's stature, like Whitman's, is characteristically American in proportion to the embarrassment with which he is received. The work is vast, his 'readers' have not really read him, and his own often contradictory impulses cast him as a chameleon in an arena where pure bulk is not a simple substance but another arcanum. *The Loom* and at least half a dozen other long poems are indispensible contemporary works. Kelly's collections swarm with lyric glitter more substantial than whole seasons of trade publishing. But where will you find a single balanced estimate of his place and worth?

Spiritual Exercises irreparably complicates the issue by radically altering the look of Kelly's work. The return in *Kill the Messenger* (1979) to what can only be called adolescent lyrical yearning is here raised to the level of the eucharist, as if honesty and simplicity could be attained by a formula. A dozen of the poems beg the reader's attention by going on too long; another dozen and a half are maudlin, self-serving, and abuses of the art. Yet even here, in Kelly's least inspired book (most generous in dross, ample in waste), there are poems that so fluently radiate the contours of the lyric that one must admit Kelly is at the moment our most exemplary lyrical master. The book's two long poems in themselves make *Spiritual Exercises* essential: "Sentence" marking vital syntactic explorations, while "The Emptying" is the single most adroit recitative of Kelly's lifelong themes (from "The Exchanges" on) and easily one of his most accomplished poems.

"The Exchanges" and many other high points (and long poems) of Kelly's twenty years' production is fortunately now available in *The Alchemist to Mercury* (North Atlantic Books). Readers dissatisfied with or

unsympathetic to Kelly's current work can at least catch up with part of his sprawling and long out-of-print opus. By some oversight, Black Sparrow does not cite *The Alchemist to Mercury* in its list of the author's titles (even though it preceded *Spiritual Exercises* by almost a year), forcing Kelly's readers, as throughout his career, to be lucky simply in order to get to the basics. One can only hope his next collection, *Under Words*, will show some signs of reckoning; otherwise, Kelly's current work endangers the integrity of one of our most vital bodies of poetry. △

The Dice Cup: Selected Prose Poems. MAX JACOB. Edited by Michael Brownstein. Sun Books. 1979.

by MARJORIE PERLOFF

> *—I met Max Jacob. Fernande and he were very funny together. They felt themselves to be a courtly couple of the first empire, he being le vieux marquis and kissing her hand and paying compliments and she the Empress Josephine receiving them. It was a caricature but a rather wonderful one.*
>
> —GERTRUDE STEIN, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas

> *—Max Jacob does discover everybody before anybody does that is quite certain. Everybody comes to him he is always there and so they always see him.*
>
> —GERTRUDE STEIN, Everybody's Autobiography

The "rather wonderful" caricaturist who could entertain Picasso's mistress, the "ami de la maison" who was "always there" and "discovered everybody" is likely to be the only Max Jacob known to most American readers.

Apollinaire, Reverdy, Cendrars—these contemporaries of Jacob have long been available in New Directions editions as well as in expensive bilingual texts published by university presses (witness the recent scholarly edition of *Calligrammes* by California). But Jacob has been curiously neglected by American critics, if not by the poets of our own avant-garde: six of the latter—John Ashbery, David Ball, Michael Brownstein, Ron Padgett, Zack Rogow, and Bill Zavatsky—have now collaborated on an edition of *Le Cornet à dés* (*The Dice Cup*), bringing together for the first time in English a large selection of the prose poems contained in the 1917 text. Anyone interested in what is happening in poetry and poetics today will be grateful to Sun Press and to Michael Brownstein for editing this book.

Why has Jacob received so little attention in America? His hermeticism is often cited as a reason, but surely *Le Cornet à dés* is no more difficult than, say, Mallarmé's "Un coup de dés," now a fashionable seminar text. No, I think that Jacob stands somewhere outside the canon, despite his close association with Picasso and Apollinaire, because of his anti-lyrical stance, his preference for a poetry of wit and intellect to one of emotion recollected in tranquility. Perhaps Romanticism, ever more "belated" and trivialized, has had to run its course before we could appreciate the tough-mindedness of a poem like the following:

Mutuel Mépris des Castes

> Pas ailleurs que chez ce dompteur de bêtes! dans l'antichambre pleine de boîtes à chaussures en carton, lui-même parut out plutôt ce fut son propre portrait par Van Dongen: un costume à carreaux noirs et blancs dont les cuirs étaient d'un brun doré. Son oeil mal indiqué était gros et ses cheveux pendaient comme des ailes de *chocarneau* (c'est un oiseau au plumage frisé). Le dompteur m'offrit du tabac et me recommanda à sa femme, une blonde effacée. "Vous n'êtes jamais entré dans une cage?—Si, comme bête!" me dit-elle. Je ne compris pas; elle m'expliqua qu'ils louaient un grand appartement meublé dans chaque ville pour pouvoir dépenser les cinq cents francs qu'ils gagnent quotidiennement: "Nous n'avons rien à nous, rien! regardez! ces chaussures, quelques livres et voilà! c'est pourquoi nous ne vous retiendrons pas à dîner." Le dompteur de bêtes fauves revint et fut surpris de ma présence. Je crois qu'il était aussi dentiste pour animaux.
>
> —*Le Cornet à dés* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 141

> Where else but in the animal tamer's house! In the ante-room full of cardboard shoe-boxes, he himself appeared or rather it was his own portrait by Van Dongen: black-and-white checked suit whose leather parts were a golden brown. His poorly drawn eye was big and his hair hung down like the wings of the *chocarneau* (a bird with curly plumage). He offered me some tobacco and commended me to his wife, a mousy blonde. "You have never been inside a cage?" "Yes, as an animal!" she said. I didn't understand; she explained that they rented a large furnished apartment in each city so as to be able to spend the five hundred francs they earned every day: "We have nothing of our own, nothing! Look—those shoes, a few books, and that's it! That's why we can't invite you to stay for dinner." The animal tamer returned and was surprised to see me there. I think he was also an animal dentist.
>
> —translated by John Ashbery, p. 58

Here the layers of parody are very complex. The kernel of the text is a classic La Fontaine beast fable, meant to teach us some sort of moral lesson about snobbery and class-consciousness. But the fable is wittily inverted: here the animal and the animal-tamer are one and the same, with the further comic twist that the animal the tamer resembles, far from being a "fauve" (Ashbery's translation does not give us the force of "Le dompteur de bêtes fauves") is the foolish "*chocarneau* (a bird with curly plumage)." In this context, the narrator's question to the animal tamer's wife, "You have never been inside a cage?" and her response, "Yes, as an animal" seems wholly reasonable. Ashbery's epithet "mousy blonde"—the original has the more neutral "une blonde effacée"—playfully contributes to the beast fable.

But Jacob is not saying anything as trite as that human beings are really animals. For, as the narrative makes clear, human beings are indefinable in the first place. The animal-tamer is not a person at all; he is "his own portrait by Van Dongen," a carelessly constructed painting (like all Fauve paintings, Jacob implies) in which the "black-and-white checked suit" has "leather parts" and the single eye seen in profile is "poorly drawn." Indeed, the whole text is a satiric portrait of the Fauve artist, whose pretensions to savage grandeur are beautifully deflated in the final image of the animal tamer as "also an animal dentist." The Fauves have, in other words, taken the bite out of art.

But again, Jacob's little fable is not just an attack on what were, from his

Cubist perspective, a group of rival painters. Beyond the local satire, we find a serious examination of the vanity of human wishes, the bourgeois desire to have something to show for one's earnings ("a large furnished apartment in each city" with its "ante-room full of cardboard shoe-boxes"), a desire bound to be rebuffed: "We have nothing of our own, nothing. Look—those shoes, a few books, and that's it. That's why we can't invite you to stay for dinner." Ultimately, then, this *is* a fable and it does have the moral announced in the title: the mutual contempt of the castes is the rivalry between Fauves and Cubists (Jacob himself), the bourgeois (animal tamer) and the artist (the man who can't be invited to dinner). From this perspective, we can now understand the first sentence: "Where else but in the animal tamer's house"—a house which is really a cage with the tamer and his wife inside it—would one learn this lesson? And what would it mean to dine with an animal dentist?

To say, as have various commentators, that a prose poem like this one is "dislocated" or "surrealist" or engages in "complex word play" does not really tell us very much. Jacob's dream narratives superficially resemble Rimbaud's ("War," for example, contains echoes of "Parade" with its "drôles très solides"), but their real affinity is less with Rimbaud or the Surrealists (or, for that matter, with the Cubist painters) than with an exact contemporary whose work Jacob could not have known at the time he wrote the poems collected in *The Dice Cup* (1903-1910) but whose role as Jewish outsider and victim curiously parallels his own. I am thinking of course of Kafka: here is "The Aunt, the Tart, and the Hat" ("La Tante, la tarte, et le chapeau") in Ashbery's translation:

> When I was a business employee I shared a small three-room apartment with a colleague. We didn't quarrel, because we were always very tired, but we spent a great deal of time identifying various pieces of clothing: a pair of trousers had been left in the living room: its ownership was established. One day at the shop an event occurred: my friend had had part of his beard shaved off. That same day he was supposed to carry a package to a district where I had to go on an errand. I took the package not without having reflected a long time. There was a great deal of talk about which metro line I ought to take and the question of the three pennies was an agitated one. That very evening at the shop, my friend invited us to lunch at his aunt's. The aunt was a former actress, almost very old, very tightly laced in her corset and who, once a year,

> made herself a little hat in the form of a tart which she rushed to put on when she was asked to sing. She sang the repertory of Thérésa. As a joke, we were served a tart in the form of a little hat. At table, there were two lovers: "I know all about that," said the old lady, "but you, my pretty child, do you realize what you are exposing yourself to?" The pretty child was at least forty years old. She replied that she had a grown son and a grown daughter and that she liked young men. (p. 55)

Here, as in Kafka, the plot line seems at first perfectly orderly and sensible: this happened, and then this, and then something else. "When I was a business employee I shared a small three-room apartment with a colleague." What could be more straightforward and simple? Throughout the text, Jacob provides a great deal of specification: "One day at the shop an event occurred," "That same day," "the three pennies," "That very evening at the shop," "At table, there were two lovers," and so on. But the temporal and spatial expectations set up by these phrases are never met for the events that unfold are seemingly quite unrelated. The establishment of ownership of "various pieces of clothing," for example, has no connection to the shaving off of the beard. The shaving incident, moreover (is the "friend" in question the same person as the "colleague" or not?) seems to have nothing to do with the errand to the outlying district, the carrying of the package, and the question which metro line to take. We only know that somehow it leads to the invitation to lunch by the friend's aunt who makes hats in the forms of tarts and viceversa. (The punning on *tarte* and *tante* is, of course, lost in the English but the near-rhyme of "aunt"/"tart"/"hat" is a respectable substitute.)

The *dejeuner* itself is absurd. The pretty child (a "belle enfant" of "at least forty") whom the aunt warns of indecent exposure and who responds that "she had a grown son and a grown daughter and that she liked young men," may be referring to the narrator and his colleague (are they the "two lovers" at the table?) or to someone else. We have, in any case, a seemingly "normal" anecdote transformed into what Ashbery himself has called "an open field of narrative possibilities." For we can invent all sorts of stories that "fit" this particular frame. First, there is clearly some reference to a homosexual love affair. But then, who are the three men referred to in the phrase "My friend invited us to lunch at his aunt's"? Again, there is some sort of satire directed against no-longer-young bourgeois ladies with particular pre-

tensions, here summed up in the tart-hat identification and the *tante-tarte* identity, with its pun on *tart*. Indeed, identity is in question throughout the poem for it is never clear who's who and what the relationships between the various characters signify. The characters are, moreover, nameless and faceless: the aunt, the pretty child, my friend, my colleague, us, them. The poem thus questions, as do so many of Jacob's texts, the very meaning of identity as well as the "normalcy" of everyday life, the work and eating rituals of bourgeois family culture, the value of reasoned action ("I took the package not without having reflected a long time").

The mode of "The Aunt, the Tart, and the Hat" thus looks ahead to some of Ashbery's own narrative poems (for example, "The Wrong Kind of Insurance"), as well as to the Zen stories in John Cage's *Silence* or the comic anecdotes that weave in and out of David Antin's talk pieces. In such texts, the individual clause or sentence is usually perfectly intelligible but the sentences fail to add up, their absurd conjunctions pointing toward the confusion between illusion and reality, between the attempt to set down what happened and the actual ways in which poetic creation takes place.

No translation can, of course, do justice to Jacob's poetic language, which relies heavily on punning and sound play. Bill Zavatsky valiantly renders the famous epigram from "Le Coq et la perle":

> Comme un bateau est le poète âgé
> ainsi qu'un dahlia, le poème étagé
> Dahlia! Dahlia! que Dalila lia (*Cornet*, p. 65)

as

> Like a ship is the agéd poet
> Like a dahlia, the terraced poem
> Dahlia! Dahlia tied by Delilah! (p. 38)

Here the last line is a fair facsimile of the original, but Jacob's sly reference to Rimbaud's "Bateau ivre" involves a play on "*poète âge*"—"*étagé*" which is wholly lost in the translation. Again, consider what happens to "Le brazero, zéro!":

> Le brazero, zéro! il s'exaspère de n'être pas un triangle muni d'ailes noires. Il se mord la queue, il est traversé de rails bleus qui se rallient, le raient et le raillent. (*Cornet*, p. 69)

Zavatksy renders this:

> The brazier, zero! it's exasperated at not being a triangle fitted with black wings. It bites its own tail, it's crisscrossed with blue rails that rail, raze, and roil at it. (p. 41)

The design is to preserve Jacob's alliteration and onomatopoeia but the effect is somewhat self-conscious because "rail, raze, and roil" does not recreate Jacob's comic use of three words that sound almost identical but mean entirely different things: "*se rallient*" ("rally"), "*raient*" (part, as in to part one's hair), and "*raillent*" ("mock" or "make fun of").

In some cases, the translator's task is made virtually impossible. Here is a third fragment from "Le Coq et la perle":

> Cet Allemand était fou d'art, de foulards et de poulardes. Dans son pays, la reine-Claude est peintre sur les foulards; à table, on en sait aussi rôdent autour des poulardes. (*Cornet*, p. 74)

Zavatsky writes:

> This German was mad about art, silk scarves, and big fat hens. In his homeland, the Queen Claudia plum is painted on the silk scarves; at table, we also know who prowls around the big fat hens. (p. 44)

Here "*fou d'art*"—"*foularde*"—"*poularde*" function as what Raymond Roussel called "rimes de faits," that is, rhymes for events in the sense that sound itself controls the direction of the narrative. The English rendition—"mad about art"—"silk scarves"—"big fat hens"—is not likely to help the reader understand Jacob's complex phonemic play.

On the whole, however, the poet-translators succeed in capturing Jacob's peculiarly mordant tone, especially in the case of the longer narrative pieces. *The Dice Cup* provides us with a good selection from *Le Cornet à dés* but includes less than half of its prose poems. Let us hope that Brownstein and his collaborators will decide to do the entire 1917 text as well as a selection from Jacob's verse poems, especially *Saint Matorel* (1911). Surely there would be today an enthusiastic audience for a poet who declares, with such curiously postmodern inflections:

> When one paints a picture, it changes completely with each touch, it turns like a cylinder and is almost endless. When it stops turning, that's

> because it's finished. My last one showed a tower of Babel in lighted candles. (p. 31)

A tower of Babel in lighted candles. The process of creation, in other words, can never produce "finish" or stasis. The gap between conception and achievement remains open; its mysteries provide us with continuing delight. △

The Bibliophile Jacob and the Spanish Forger

by Norman Klein

The Bibliophile Jacob (Paul Lacroix) devoted his life to being a connoisseur of Romantic history. From 1826 to 1884, over a thousand books bore his name. As a young man, sporting an open shirt and byronic attitude, he influenced Hugo, Dumas, Nerval and Vigny. In middle age, often seen in monocle and morning coat, he presided over curators and rare book dealers, while director of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

For generations, he was frequently approached by Parisian savants for answers to research problems. The oracle of curious and perverse detail, he would draw back, and find the facts instantly. As an unquestioned authority, he had no need for reference books. His own books were the standard reference.

He was a popularizer of the medieval and the immoral, but always with good taste, in books on fifteenth century prostitution, Renaissance fashions (from codpieces to corsets), devil worship, rare bookbindings, arcane libraries, Moliere bibliography, lost cemetaries and the legend of the Wandering Jew.

What became of this monument of authenticity in the twentieth century, a particularly unreliable century for the authentic? In 1930, the director of the Morgan Library in New York discovered a forgery of the fifteenth century Spanish painter, Jorge Ingles. The forger (or team of forgers) was

never found; he had long since collected his money. Known simply as the Spanish Forger, he had also painted a remarkable triptych of Jean Fouquet, and at least 150 other master forgeries.

According to the International Herald Tribune (1979), the Spanish Forger's "chief compositional and thematic sources were five illustrated volumes on medieval and Renaissance life and culture written by (the Bibliophile Jacob) and published in Paris between 1869 and 1882. These books not only provided the forger with material, but by their popularity also created a market for his works."

The forger, like all art specialists of the day, knew that curators thumbed through books of the Bibliophile Jacob, to check on the authenticity of a painting. As the Bibliophile Jacob himself had often warned: "My work is dangerous in the hands of passionately gullible archeologues. . . . Even I, in six generations, could not scientifically verify a fact, even halfway. . . . If someone bets that I am never party to a hoax, bet against him."

The Bibliophile Jacob would certainly have been fascinated by these forgeries. He might have cranked out a book on Greek and Roman thieves, or a few prefaces on art hoaxes. Like Romantics of his generation, impressed by ruined abbeys in the moonlight and guilds of thieves, he admired the criminal act. In 1828, along with many other young literary men of Paris, he had sat at the feet of the master criminal Lacenaire, and may have visited his prison cell, along with Victor Hugo.

He saw all information as a sort of hoax, and was not, in the end, a very careful researcher. He was more a presence in Parisian society than a scholarly monument. "Over the silent witnesses," he wrote, "I am inventing the most exciting road to the present that I can." Δ

Keeping It Old: A Review of the New New American Poetry

by JEROME ROTHENBERG

As Donald Allen's anthology, *The New American Poetry*, marked the final emergence, circa 1960, of a major moment in American writing, its appearance in revised form (*The Postmoderns*, co-edited with George Butterick) feels, sadly, like that moment's end & its absorption into "literature." It is a hard thing for me to say: hard because I wasn't in that first version (& wanted to be) & because I am in the second; hard too because the negative response seems so obvious that it feels redundant to be voicing it here. I will, however, put the best face on it & assume that the occasion may have this much in common with that of *The New American Poetry*—to allow us to take stock of where we are & where we've been, as a way of returning to an openness that may allow us—again—to move ahead.

I make anthologies—at least I hope I do—out of a deep suspicion of anthologies. That is to say, I'm aware of real distinctions, even conflicts, in the genre—loosely speaking, between the "bad ones" & the "good ones" or, more exactly, between anthologies that perpetuate an established view of poetry & those rarer ones that function, like good poetry itself, to break new ground & thereby to change our set ideas of language & reality. Anthology packages, like those published by Norton & largely designed for classroom use, are the most notorious examples of the first kind; but I would also include certain collections of "new poets" (without any commitment to a new poetics or a new poetry) as less obvious but possibly more damaging ones. The contrast, in that last instance, would be between Allen's "new American *poetry*" & an anthology, from a few years before it, of the "new *poets* of England & America." That there might be a similar contrast between *The New American Poetry* & *The Postmoderns* is an irony it will be hard to get away from.

The first anthology so positioned as to (profoundly) influence my own generation of poets was Robert Motherwell's *The Dada Painters& Poets*—a gathering of images & manifestos that revealed a movement from the near past that had until then been kept from us. *The New American Poetry* was the other great example, closing out the 1950s—&, once I got really interested in the possibility of all that, I could look back to Zukofsky's

"Objectivists" Anthology of 1932 & Pound's spottier *Active Anthology* of a few years before that, among a handful of others. In the 1960s and early 1970s (a great decade for anthologies, partly spurred on by Allen's effort), I felt myself particularly instructed by LaMonte Young's simply named *An Anthology* (a collection of immediately contemporary Fluxus works) & by Emmett Williams' several shots at anthologizing concrete poetry. Closer to home—& specifically attempts to keep the "new American poetry" impulse going—were Clayton Eshleman's *A Caterpillar Anthology* (a work of poetics as well as poetry) & Robert Kelly's *A Controversy of Poets*, which unfortunately focused on individuals (hence: reputations) & was muddied by co-editorship with the very differently biased Paris Leary (hence: the "controversy" of the title). Richard Kostelanetz's spew of anthologies presented examples of experimental poetry in a generally useful if unselective way—as did George Quasha's *Open Poetry*, in which the several guest-edited & trendy-seeming sections were of unequal interest & importance. My own efforts, from *Technicians of the Sacred* on, followed a different approach to present & future work—by contexting it beside a revision of our views of the past & the culturally different. In addition, there continued to be anthologies built around specific poetic and extrapoetic occasions (Allen DeLoach's *The East Side Scene*, the various attempts to anthologize the New York School, and numerous anthologies of minority and women writers that fluctuated between affirmative action & meaningful questions of cultural context), along with generational anthologies (by outsiders to the generation like Paul Carroll or insiders to it like Michael Lally) in which issues of poetics seemed secondary to the process of spotting & predicting reputations.

This mountain of anthologies—& I have, believe me, only just scratched its surface—is itself a signpost of the changed landscape in which the new *New American Poetry* appears. The lack in 1960 of a genuinely experimental anthology designed, in Pound's now famous words, to "make it new," was crucial to the original book's impact, its long & dominating presence. The period covered was the preceding fifteen years, & the book's truthfully arrogant assertion was that a significant & transformative movement had arisen during that time that had never before been gathered & anthologized. The common characteristic of this "new American poetry," the editor then told us, was "a total rejection of all those qualities typical of academic verse"—or, more positively put, that it "had built on the achieve-

ments of" Pound & Williams "and gone on to evolve new conceptions of the poem."

The changes & the problems in *The Postmoderns* begin with the title itself, presented on the cover in bright, open, empty letters: a fashionable going term of the 1980s & one that would have been unlikely twenty years before. (Never mind that the editors try to make Olson's early use of it—however casual—a means of justification, when in a direct sense it was more apt then to have been used by a Randall Jarrell or a Delmore Schwartz.) What we have here, at best, is an attempt to co-opt a new academic favorite—to win points with a claim that the poets in this book (largely unchanged from the 1960 version) are the long-sought, true "postmoderns." If so (& the claim seems hardly to matter outside the "academy"), there are some problems still to be overcome: that the term (Olson or no) didn't show up in *The New American Poetry* & that Allen, back then, identified the "new American poets" as the inheritors of the real & neglected *modernism* of Pound & Williams: "our avant-garde . . . the true continuers of the modern movement in American poetry . . . closely allied to modern jazz and abstract expressionist painting." (That Allen & Butterick now make "postmodern" sound like a term actually used by poets like Creeley, O'Hara, Ginsberg, Duncan, Snyder, & Baraka, obscures the indifference or disdain that most have felt for it.)

I am not quibbling here, unless all our history should prove a quibble. The term "postmodern" is critic-based & it is ultimately dull & empty. It robs us, unless revised & freed from its academic usage, of a sharp sense of lineage—as in the present case, where Butterick & Allen drift from Allen's re-claiming of a direct descent from Pound & Williams, et al., to the myth of an intervening middle-ground "modernism" identified with "younger successors such as Berryman and Lowell, Bishop and Sexton." On one of their accompanying lists of the defining modern poets, Williams is somehow dropped, Auden is somehow added, & Stein, for one, is still excluded—an omission significant for the limits of this book, as it was for the original.

The other changes—of format & personnel—are the more substantial limits. I will discuss them as they involve strategies of anthologizing rather than taste & selection, though I will end up touching on the latter as well. There is no doubt that Allen & Butterick were up against a sticky proposition, & I hope that nothing I say ignores the difficulties involved. Some of

these they treat in their Preface, & that (along with my own experience with anthologies) is as good a place as any to begin.

There is an unmistakeable sadness about the new Preface—a feeling on the editors' part that it would be hopeless to "attempt to recapture or repeat the pioneering effort of the initial edition." Instead they set out "to consolidate the gains of the previous anthology and confirm its predictions." While this may sound modest, it is in fact an act of self-confirmation that demands, in terms of the poetics, an overriding commitment to the dominant modes of the original—projectivist, beat, New York school, etc.—& to the earlier omissions of what was even then possible: concrete, soundtext, intermedia, chance operations, among other "new conceptions of the poem."

The problem here is obvious. The more the new conceptions are suppressed and the editors become fixed in their idea of an avant-garde, the more the matter of prediction focuses on reputations: which poets have "endured" & "have achieved a certain recognition" & which have not. This is the canon-making mind at work again (not Bloomian here but at the service of the "avant-garde"), & while it may be unavoidable to some degree, it becomes intrusive where that other sense—of an evolving & open poetics—fails.

To handle the change of personnel, the editors do what editors have always done: they drop some poets, add some others, and beef up the work of the survivors with poems written in the intervening decades. Here the preface turns quantitative, & the net result (by my revised count) runs like this: of the forty-four poets in the original edition (a typo in the Preface makes it "thirty-four"), fifteen are dropped & twenty-nine retained, & this plus nine additions puts the new list at thirty-eight.* I will leave it to others to argue the literary specifics & statistical subtleties at work here. What stands out for me is that the original poets representing a period of fifteen years of American poetry (at most) outnumber those emerging in the following twenty years by a proportion of over three to one. (In terms of page count, more like five to one.) If you consider that four or five of the new poets were already

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*The nine new poets ("Jackson Mac Low, Jerome Rothenberg, Diane di Prima, Anselm Hollo, Joanne Kyger, Robert Kelly, James Koller, Ed Sanders, and Anne Waldman") are named in the Preface. The fifteen deletions, who aren't, include: Helen Adam, Ebbe Borregard, Bruce Boyd, Ray Bremser, James Broughton, Paul Carroll, Kirby Doyle, Richard Duerden, Edward Field, Madeline Gleason, Philip Lamantia, Edward Marshall, Peter Orlovsky, Stuart Z. Perkoff, & Gilbert Sorrentino.

active in the late 1950s & that none of them began writing after 1970 (twelve years ago!), the imbalance is overwhelming.

I'm not sure how much this reflects a "judgment" by the editors about the two periods involved—although in some sense in clearly does. The intention seems to be to deal with the full thirty-five years since World War II & to continue the earlier "rejection of all those qualities of academic verse," however much that rejection may have lost its former cutting edge. Yet the range of the poetry is much like that of the original, & here in fact may be the book's real flaw: its failure to recognize & move beyond the limits of the earlier edition. This enshrinement of the new in a few old hands seems almost to freeze the idea of newness, as if the editors were determined to keep it *old* or, even worse, *respectable.* (The book now has only one poet under forty—thus becomes a kind of generational anthology of the middle-aged.) But here the book blurs, as the old one rarely did, & the difficulty in getting a better vision of the work at hand runs up against two other changes—structural moves that break the play between poetry & discourse that made *The New American Poetry* a useful & germinal book to the time of its revision.

The first of these changes drops the old book's subdivisions—Black Mountain, San Francisco, Beat, New York School—& arranges the poets, neutrally & chronologically, by year of birth. While Allen & Butterick describe such categories as "geographical" & a matter of "convenience," they were clearly more than that: signals, for all their arbitrariness & lack of rigor, of differences between groups & individuals that made of the "new American poetry" something more than a single monolithic movement. The new arrangement, by contrast, implies that the work is more of a piece than previously claimed or, at the other extreme, that it must now be read on a case-by-case basis.

Neither view alone is accurate, but the former (the argument for homogeneity) gets the greater mileage—in the editors' contention, for example, that "those earlier designations, if they were ever more than terms of convenience, have been rendered obsolete and unnecessary by the poets' subsequent activities and associations." Here Allen & Butterick rightly recognize the great number of crossovers in recent years, which they then add to the argument for "postmodern" as the "more encompassing designation" that will cover it all. Along with that, if I read them rightly, comes more than a

hint that Olson is to be taken as an even greater force than heretofore acknowledged—both through his positioning as oldest & first poet in *The Postmoderns* (no longer bounded by the Black Mountain section) & through the presentation of his "projective verse" essay as the rallying & focal point for virtually all "the energies of the new poetry." If Olson's singular dominance is questionable for even some Black Mountain poets, it feels downright contrived in relation to the Beats, the New York School, & any number of poets from Mac Low to Spicer & on.

It is closure that I fear & closure that I sense here. And the second change I spoke of—the elimination of the poets' statements on poetics, which made up a separate section of the original—only feeds that sense. In Olson's case, say, we no longer have his "Projective Verse" to look at, directly & in juxtaposition, even conflict, with a range of alternative poetics; & we no longer have that clash of concepts that made the old book so exciting & gave the poems themselves a larger context. The result is to rob the book of its manifesto quality—the assertion of the poets' right to context their own works & lives—on a scale not seen since the Dadaists published twenty-four manifestos in *Littérature* & performed them as a simultaneity on a stage in Paris. That a "fair sampling" is given in *The Poetics of the New American Poetry*, edited by Allen with Warren Tallman, doesn't make up for their absence here—nor for the absence of related works from the 1960s & 70s that would have immeasurably "thickened the plot."

The poetics of the "new American poetry" (not the book now, but the event) has been, over its entire span, an evolving & multifaceted creation; and the brilliance of the Allen anthology was in the way that diversity was presented. In light of that, the key editorial decisions—to omit the poetics & the sectioning—are, along with the reluctance to open the field further, a blunder & a distortion. The result is a uniformity of presentation—relieved only by the diversity from poem to poem—that now runs through the entire book. Poets appear where birth has placed them. Biographical statements (often quirky & extended in the original) take on a standard length & often, though still written largely by the poets, a standard tone.* And all such

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*A striking example: Jack Spicer's cranky short note of 1960—beginning "does not like his life written down"—is replaced, posthumously, by a couple of informative paragraphs that completely reverse his intention.

statements now end with uniformly structured bibliographies so full of out-of-print material that they could only have been designed as research tools (the stock-in-trade of the academy) rather than guides to ordinary human commerce. While the book may still be what Pound called "a ball of light in one's hands," that light comes, as with most anthologies, wholly & randomly through the poems themselves.

In saying all of this, I realize (better than most) the difficulties Allen & Butterick were facing. The revision in a single volume was probably an impossible task, & I suspect that the editors started out with different intentions & were deflected by the economics of publishing & its attendant roadblocks. Maybe the revision as such should never have happened, or maybe the limits of the task could have been more clearly stated. But once into it, the editors should have tried, by every means available, to tie the new edition to alternative poetic strategies &, by the arrangement of poems or by the use of poets' comments, to bring the differences to surface. By which I mean—to be specific—that a Jackson Mac Low without his poetics & represented by two token poems in someone else's contexts is a poet weakened in his power to transform. And so on for the rest.

Let me now, so as to take some risks myself, fill in the matter of poets & movements missing from *The New American Poetry Revised*—not to rewrite Allen's & Butterick's book for them but to sketch the poetics of the situation as I understand it. This is the kind of thing, frankly, that Quasha was attempting to do in *Open Poetry* & that Quasha & I were attempting in *America a Prophecy*: to advance & broaden the work, which Allen & others had already done for us, of mapping the progress of a poetry that is both anti-"academic" (if that term still matters) & has "gone on to evolve new conceptions of the poem." While stressing strategies over individuals, the following inclusions seem to me germinal to where we are at present, without which I can see no claim to an informed avant-garde, modernism, postmodernism, metamodernism, experimentalism, or any other name you want to give it:

> *Concrete & Visual Poetry.* More solidly advanced in Europe than the U.S. in the 1950s, but a real presence here since circa 1965. American precedents in cummings, Lindsay, Crosby, Patchen, & Pound-Fenollosa on the Chinese character: "a splendid flash of concrete poetry." The essential representative is Emmett Williams.

Fluxus, Intermedia, Chance Operations. Already underway by the late 1950s & present in La Monte Young's *An Anthology* (1963). A crucial link between the other arts & poetry—that kind of boundary crossing as another aspect of postmodernism. Mac Low for one, if properly presented, but also Cage, an active poet since the 1960s & an equal to Olson (his senior by two years) or Ginsberg in terms of influence & stance.

The New Performance Poetry. Work moving off the page in ways more experimental than the poetry reading as such. Its soundtext side as covered by Mac Low & Cage (above), another aspect in David Antin talk-poems, Giorno modified-voice experiments, etc.

The 2nd or 3rd Generation New York School. A widely influential departure from the O'Hara/Ashbery/Koch configuration in the NAP—with strong later connections to the old Beat poets. Represented in the revised edition by Anne Waldman & conceivably Ed Sanders. But the absence of the central figure of Ted Berrigan is hard to com prehend.

The New Black Poetry, Indian Poetry, Latino Poetry, etc. Not as a question of affirmative action but as a major poetry event of the last two decades & a spin-off in part from NAP ideas of American speech, jazz connections, reinterpretations of America, "speech-rhythm prosody" (A. Ginsberg), "your own voice . . . how you sound" (Baraka)—but Baraka/Jones remains, after all these years, the only "third world" poet in the book. No Henderson/Reed/Sanchez/Cruz included for their *language*; no Simon Ortiz to link up through his culture with the oldest powers of the continent.

The "Language" Poets. The most recent of the U.S. avant-garde movements & the most involved with the construction of a new poetics. While the question of origins is fluid, the theoretical writings emphasize connections with NAP & pre-NAP poets such as Stein, Williams, Zukofsky, Eigner, even Olson, as well as the older European avant-garde. A "senior" poet like Ron Silliman or Clark Coolidge could clearly represent this movement. [Silliman's anthology, "In the American Tree," already in the works.]

The Poem in Prose: The "New Sentence" (R. Silliman). A perusal of *The Postmoderns* shows only one short poem in prose, despite the pre-

valence of this mode in much recent (i.e. postmodern) poetry. A different creature from the prose poem, it is already important in both Duncan & Creeley, say, [Structure of Rime, A Day Book], & back into Williams & Stein. Central to the practice of younger writers such as B. Mayer, C. Harryman, B. Einzig, & the form of choice among many of the "language" poets, its absence here is likely the result of too narrow a reading of projectivist poetics re the line & breath, etc.

And, finally, there is the matter of the individual poets passed over for whom a representative niche cannot easily be found. The temptation is to list a dozen such—in my own territory or outside it—who are the equals certainly of most of the poets included. "There are," say the editors of their own selections, "only thirty-eight poets out of the myriad," & with this one cannot argue. But the statement that follows—that *The Postmoderns* "does offer a sharpened focus to represent an era, and therein lies its usefulness and its hope"—remains, at the least, questionable. While we may have a better idea of where *some* of the original poets have gone, the focus—for the era as a whole—is not a sharpness but a blur.

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The summary would run like this.

Both Allen & Butterick are editors of integrity who have contributed much to the dissemination & understanding of aspects of the American avant-garde. In revising a classic like *The New American Poetry*, they had an opportunity to advance the work of the earlier book in ways that most of us can only dream of. Their decision, it seems to me, was to take the relatively easier way: by treating the "new American poetry" as an almost finished structure whose principal participants & forms had already been established by Allen. This is to freeze process or make it into history—& *The Postmoderns*, though "new," reads more like a work-of-the-past than does its unrevised predecessor even now. In place of the unsettled & unsettling quality of *The New American Poetry*, what we're given here is a more familiar gathering: an anthology geared to classroom use & newly titled & reordered to serve that altered function.

At the same time—unless Grove Press has a sense of values rare among

publishers—the original anthology will now go out of print. That one of course was the shaker & mover for a whole generation & more of new American poets, & maybe in its absence, a still newer generation will have a chance to reassess & take the next step forward. △

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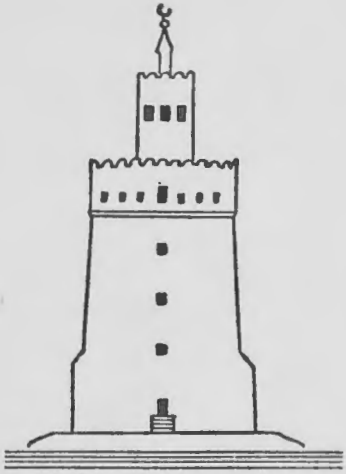

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